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John Keats

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN KEATS.

WITH A LIFE.

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THE LIFE OF KEATS.

THERE are few poets whose works contain slighter hints of their personal history than those of Keats; yet there are, perhaps, even fewer, whose real lives, or rather the conditions upon which they lived, are more clearly traceable in what they have written. To write the life of a man was formerly understood to mean the cataloguing and placing of circumstances, of those things which stood about the life and were more or less related to it, but were not the life itself. But Biography from day to day holds dates cheaper and facts dearer. A man's life (as far as its outward events are concerned) may be made for him, as his clothes are by the tailor, of this cut or that, of finer or coarser material, but the gait and gesture show through, and give to trappings, in themselves characterless, an individuality that belongs to the man himself. It is those essential facts which underlie the life and make the individual man, that are of importance, and it is the cropping out of these upon the surface, that gives us indications by which to judge of the true nature hidden below. Every man has his block given him, and the figure he cuts will depend very much upon the shape of that — upon the knots and twists which existed in it from the beginning. We were designed in the cradle, perhaps earlier, and it is in finding out this design, and shaping ourselves to it, that our years are spent wisely. It is

the vain endeavor to make ourselves what we are not that has strewn history with so many broken purposes and lives left in the rough.

Keats hardly lived long enough to develop a well-outlined character, for that results commonly from the resistance made by temperament to the many influences by which the world, as it may happen then to be, endeavors to mould every one in its own image. What his temperament was we can see clearly, and also that it subordinated itself more and more to the discipline of art.

JOHN KEATS, the second of four children, ~~like~~ Chaucer, was a Londoner, but, unlike Chaucer, he was certainly not of gentle blood. Mr. Monckton Milnes, who seems to have had a kindly wish to create him gentleman by brevet, says that he was "born in the upper ranks of the middle class." This shows a commendable tenderness for the nerves of English society, and reminds one of Northcote's story of the violin-player who, wishing to compliment his pupil, George III., divided all fiddlers into three classes, those who could not play at all, those who played very badly, and those who played very well, assuring his majesty that he had made such commendable progress as to have already reached the second rank. The American public will perhaps not be disturbed by knowing that the father of Keats (as Mr. Milnes had told us in an earlier biography) "was employed in the establishment of Mr. Jennings, the proprietor of large livery-stables on the Pavement in Moorfields, nearly opposite the entrance into Finsbury Circus." So that, after all, it was not so bad; for, *first*, Mr. Jennings was a *proprietor*; *second*, he was the proprietor of an *establishment*; *third*, he was the proprietor of a *large establishment*; and, *fourth*, this large establishment was *nearly* opposite Fins-

bury Circus, — a name which vaguely dilates the imagination with all sorts of conjectured grandeurs. It is true, Leigh Hunt asserts that Keats "was a little too sensitive on the score of his origin,"* but we can find no trace of such a feeling either in his poetry, or in such of his letters as have been printed. We suspect the fact to have been that he resented with becoming pride the vulgar Blackwood and Quarterly standard which measured genius by genealogies. It is enough that his poetical pedigree is of the best, tracing through Spenser to Chaucer, and that Pegasus does not stand at livery even in the largest establishments in Moorfields.

As well as we can make out, then, the father of Keats was a groom in the service of Mr. Jennings, and married the daughter of his master. Thus, on the mother's side, at least, we find a grandfather; on the father's there is no hint of such an ancestor, and we must charitably take him for granted. It is of more importance that the elder Keats was a man of sense and energy, and that his wife was a lively and intelligent woman, who hastened the birth of the poet by her passionate devotion to amusement, bringing him into the world, a seven months' child, on the 29th October, 1795, instead of the 29th December, as would have been conventionally proper. Mr. Milnes describes her as "tall, with a large oval face, and a somewhat saturnine demeanor."† This last circumstance does not agree very well with what he had just before told us of her liveliness; but he consoles us by adding that "she succeeded, *however*, in inspiring her children with the profoundest affection." This was particularly true of John, who once, when between four and five years old, mounted guard at her

* Hunt's *Autobiography*, (American edition,) vol. ii. p. 36.

† Milnes's *Life of Keats*, (American edition,) p. 15.

chamber-door with an old sword, when she was ill, and the doctor had ordered her not to be disturbed.*

In 1804, Keats being in his ninth year, his father was killed by a fall from his horse. His mother seems to have been ambitious for her children, and there was some talk of sending John to Harrow. Fortunately this plan was thought too expensive, and he was sent instead to the School of Mr. Clarke at Enfield with his brothers. A maternal uncle, who had distinguished himself by his courage under Duncan at Camperdown, was the hero of his nephews, and they went to school resolved to maintain the family reputation for courage. John was always fighting, and was chiefly noted among his school-fellows as a strange compound of pluck and sensibility. He attacked an usher who had boxed his brother's ears, and when his mother died, in 1810, was moodily inconsolable, (in spite, it seems, of her "saturnine demeanor,") hiding himself for several days in a nook under the master's desk, and refusing all comfort from teacher or friend.

He was popular at school, as boys of spirit always are, and impressed his companions with a sense of his power. They thought he would one day be a famous soldier. This may have been owing to the stories he told them of the heroic uncle, whose deeds, we may be sure, were properly famed by the boy Homer, and whom they probably took for an admiral at the least, as it would have been well for Keats's literary prosperity if he had been. At any rate, they thought John would be a great man; which is the main thing, for the public opinion of the playground is truer and more discerning than that of the world; and if you tell us

* Haydon tells the story differently, but we think Mr. Milnes's version the best.

what the boy was, we will tell you what the man longs to be, however he may be repressed by necessity or fear of the police reports.

Mr. Milnes has failed to discover anything else especially worthy of record in the school-life of Keats. He translated the twelve books of the *Æneid*, read *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Incas of Peru*, and looked into *Shakspeare*. He left school in 1810, with little Latin and no Greek, but he had studied *Spence's Polymetis*, *Tooke's Pantheon*, and *Lemprière's Dictionary*, and knew gods, nymphs, and heroes, which were quite as good company as aorists and aspirates. It is pleasant to fancy the horror of those respectable writers if their pages could suddenly have become alive under their pens with all that the young poet saw in them.*

On leaving school, he was apprenticed for five years to a surgeon at Edmonton. His master was a Mr. Hammond, "of some eminence" in his profession, as Mr. Milnes takes care to assure us. The place was of more importance than the master, for its neighborhood to Enfield enabled him to keep up his intimacy with the family of his former teacher, Mr. Clarke, and to borrow books of them.

* There is always some one willing to make himself a sort of accessory after the fact in any success; always an old woman or two, ready to remember omens of all quantities and qualities in the childhood of persons who have become distinguished. Accordingly, a certain "Mrs. Grafty of Craven Street, Finsbury," assures Mr. George Keats, when he tells her that John is determined to be a poet, "that this was very odd, because when he could just speak, instead of answering questions put to him, he would always make a rhyme to the last word people said, and then laugh." The early histories of heroes, like those of nations, are always more or less mythical, and we give the story for what it is worth. Doubtless there is a gleam of intelligence in it, for the old lady pronounces it odd that any one should *determine* to be a poet, and seems to have wished to hint that the matter was determined earlier and by a higher disposing power. There are few children who do not soon discover the charm of rhyme, and perhaps fewer who can resist making fun of the Mrs. Graftys of Craven Street, Finsbury, when they have the chance. See *Haydon's Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 361.

In 1812, when he was in his seventeenth year, Mr. Charles Cowden Clarke lent him the *Faerie Queene*. Nothing that is told of Orpheus or Amphion is more wonderful than this miracle of Spenser's, transforming a surgeon's apprentice into a great poet. Keats learned at once the secret of his birth, and henceforward his indentures ran to Apollo instead of Mr. Hammond. Thus could the Muse defend her son. It is the old story, — the lost heir discovered by his aptitude for what is gentle and knightly.

Before long we find him studying Chaucer, then Shakspeare, and afterward Milton. That he read wisely, his comments on the *Paradise Lost* are enough to prove. He now also commenced poet himself, but does not appear to have neglected the study of his profession. He was a youth of energy and purpose, and, though he no doubt penned many a stanza when he should have been anatomizing, and walked the hospitals accompanied by the early gods, nevertheless passed a very creditable examination in 1817. In the spring of this year, also, he prepared to take his first degree as poet, and accordingly published a small volume containing a selection of his earlier essays in verse. It attracted little attention, and the rest of this year seems to have been occupied with a journey on foot in Scotland, and the composition of *Endymion*, which was published in 1818. Milton's *Tetrachordon* was not better abused; but Milton's assailants were unorganized, and were obliged each to print and pay for his own dingy little quarto, trusting to the natural laws of demand and supply to furnish him with readers. Keats was arraigned by the constituted authorities of literary justice. They might be, nay, they were Jeffrieses and Scroggses, but the sentence was published, and the penalty inflicted before all England. The differ-

ence between his fortune and Milton's was that between being pelted by a mob of personal enemies, and being set in the pillory. In the first case, the annoyance brushes off mostly with the mud; in the last, there is no solace but the consciousness of suffering in a great cause. This solace, to a certain extent, Keats had; for his ambition was noble, and he hoped not to make a great reputation, but to be a great poet. Haydon says that Wordsworth and Keats were the only men he had ever seen who looked conscious of a lofty purpose.

It is curious that men should resent more fiercely what they suspect to be good verses, than what they know to be bad morals. Is it because they feel themselves incapable of the one, and not of the other? However it be, the best poetry has been the most savagely attacked, and men who scrupulously practised the Ten Commandments as if there were never a *not* in any of them, felt every sentiment of their better nature outraged by the *Lyrical Ballads*. It is idle to attempt to show that Keats did not suffer keenly from the vulgarities of Blackwood and the Quarterly. He suffered in proportion as his ideal was high, and he was conscious of falling below it. In England, especially, it is not pleasant to be ridiculous, even if you are a lord; but to be ridiculous and an apothecary at the same time, is almost as bad as it was formerly to be excommunicated. *A priori*, there was something absurd in poetry written by the son of an assistant in the livery-stables of Mr. Jennings, even though they were an establishment, and a large establishment, and nearly opposite Finsbury Circus. Mr. Gifford, the ex-cobbler, thought so in the Quarterly, and Mr. Terry, the actor,* thought so even more distinctly in Blackwood, bidding the young

* Haydon (*Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 379) says that he "strongly suspects" Terry to have written the articles in Blackwood.

apothecary "back to his gallipots!" It is not pleasant to be talked down upon by your inferiors who happen to have the advantage of position, nor to be drenched with ditch-water, though you know it to be thrown by a scullion in a garret.

Keats, as his was a temperament in which sensibility was excessive, could not but be galled by this treatment. He was galled the more that he was also a man of strong sense, and capable of understanding clearly how hard it is to make men acknowledge solid value in a person whom they have once heartily laughed at. Reputation is in itself only a farthing-candle, of wavering and uncertain flame, and easily blown out, but it is the light by which the world looks for and finds merit. Keats longed for fame, but longed above all to deserve it. Thrilling with the electric touch of sacred leaves, he saw in vision, like Dante, that small procession of the elder poets to which only elect centuries can add another laurelled head. Might he, too, deserve from posterity the love and reverence which he paid to those antique glories? It was no unworthy ambition, but everything was against him, — birth, health, even friends, since it was partly on their account that he was sneered at. His very name stood in his way, for Fame loves best such syllables as are sweet and sonorous on the tongue, like Spenserian, Shakspearian. In spite of Juliet, there is a great deal in names, and when the fairies come with their gifts to the cradle of the selected child, let one, wiser than the rest, choose a name for him from which well-sounding derivatives can be made, and best of all with a termination in *on*. Men judge the current coin of opinion by the ring, and are readier to take without question whatever is Platonic, Baconian, Newtonian, Johnsonian, Washingtonian, Jeffersonian, Napoleonic, and all the rest. You cannot make a good

adjective out of Keats, — the more pity, — and to say a thing is *Keatsy* is to condemn it. Fate likes fine names.

Haydon tells us that Keats was very much depressed by the fortunes of his book. This was natural enough, but he took it all in a manly way, and determined to revenge himself by writing better poetry. He knew that activity, and not despondency, is the true counterpoise to misfortune. Haydon is sure of the change in his spirits, because he would come to the painting-room and sit silent for hours. But we rather think that the conversation, where Mr. Haydon was, resembled that in a young author's first play, where the other interlocutors are only brought in as convenient points for the hero to hitch the interminable web of his monologue on. Besides, Keats had been continuing his education this year, by a course of Elgin marbles and pictures by the great Italians, and might very naturally have found little to say about Mr. Haydon's extensive works, which he would have cared to hear. Mr. Milnes, on the other hand, in his eagerness to prove that Keats was not killed by the article in the *Quarterly*, is carried too far toward the opposite extreme, and more than hints that he was not even hurt by it. This would have been true of Wordsworth, who, by a constant companionship with mountains, had acquired something of their manners, but was simply impossible to a man of Keats's temperament.

On the whole, perhaps, we need not respect Keats the less for having been gifted with sensibility, and may even say what we believe to be true, that his health was injured by the failure of his book. A man cannot have a sensuous nature and be pachydermatous at the same time; and if he be imaginative as well as sensuous, he suffers just in proportion to the amount of his imagination. - It is

perfectly true that what we call the world, in these affairs, is nothing more than a mere Brocken spectre, the projected shadow of ourselves; but as long as we do not know it, it is a very passable giant. We are not without experience of natures so purely intellectual that their bodies had no more concern in their mental doings and sufferings than a house has with the good or ill fortune of its occupant. But poets are not built on this plan, and especially poets like Keats, in whom the moral seems to have so perfectly interfused the physical man, that you might almost say he could feel sorrow with his hands, so truly did his body, like that of Donne's mistress, think and remember and forebode. The healthiest poet of whom our civilization has been capable says that when he beholds

—“desert a beggar born,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,”

(alluding, plainly enough, to the Giffords of his day,)

“And simple truth miscalled simplicity,”
(as it was long afterward in Wordsworth's case,)

“And Captive Good attending Captain Ill,”

that then even he, the poet to whom of all others life seems to have been dearest, as it was also the fullest of enjoyment, “tired of all these,” had nothing for it but to cry for “restful Death.”

Keats, as we have said, accepted his ill fortune courageously. On the 9th of October, 1818, he writes to his publisher, Mr. Hessey, “I cannot but feel indebted to those gentlemen who have taken my part. As for the rest, I begin to get acquainted with my own strength and weakness. Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a

severe critic of his own works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what 'Blackwood' or the 'Quarterly' could inflict: and also, when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary re-perception and ratification of what is fine. J. S. is perfectly right in regard to 'the slipshod Endymion.' That it is so is no fault of mine. No! though it may sound a little paradoxical, it is as good as I had power to make it by myself. Had I been nervous about its being a perfect piece, and with that view asked advice and trembled over every page, it would not have been written; for it is not in my nature to fumble. I will write independently. I have written independently *without judgment*. I may write independently and *with judgment*; hereafter. The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man. It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself. In 'Endymion' I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortable advice. I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest." *

This was undoubtedly true, and it was naturally the side which a large-minded person would display to a friend. This is what he thought; but whether it was what he *felt*, we think doubtful. We look upon it rather as one of the phenomena of that multanimous nature of the poet, which makes him for the moment that which he has an intellectual perception of. Elsewhere he says something which seems to hint at the true state of the case.

* Milnes's *Life and Letters of Keats*, pp. 145-6.

“I must think that difficulties nerve the spirit of a man: *they make our prime objects a refuge as well as a passion.*” One cannot help contrasting Keats with Wordsworth; the one altogether poet, the other essentially a Wordsworth with the poetic faculty added; the one shifting from form to form, and from style to style, and pouring his hot throbbing life into every mould; the other remaining always the individual, producing works, and not so much living in his poems as memorially recording his life in them. When Wordsworth alludes to the foolish criticisms on his writings, he speaks serenely and generously of Wordsworth the poet, as if he were an unbiassed third person, who takes up the argument merely in the interest of literature. He towers into a bald egotism which is quite above and beyond selfishness. Poesy was his employment; it was Keats’s very existence; and he felt the rough treatment of his verses as if it had been the wounding of a limb. To Wordsworth, composing was a healthy exercise; his slow pulse and unimpressible nature gave him assurance of a life so long that he could wait; and when we read his poems we should never suspect the existence in him of any sense but that of observation, as if Wordsworth the poet were only a great sleepless eye, accompanied by Mr. Wordsworth, the distributor of stamps, as a reverential scribe and Baruch. But every one of Keats’s poems was a sacrifice of vitality; a virtue went away from him into every one of them; even yet, as we turn the leaves, they seem to warm and thrill our fingers with the flush of his fine senses, and the flutter of his electrical nerves, and we do not wonder he felt that what he did was to be done swiftly.

In the mean time, his younger brother languished and died; his elder seems to have been in some way unfortunate, and had gone to America, and

Keats himself showed symptoms of the hereditary disease which caused his death at last. It is in October, 1818, that we find the first allusions to a passion, which was, ere long, to consume him. It is plain enough beforehand, that those were not moral or mental graces that should attract a man like Keats. His intellect was satisfied and absorbed by his art, his books, and his friends. He could have companionship and appreciation from men; what he craved of woman was only repose. That luxurious nature, which would have tossed uneasily on a crumpled rose-leaf, must have something softer to rest upon than intellect, something less ethereal than culture. It was his body that needed to have its equilibrium restored, the waste of his nervous energy that must be repaired by deep draughts of the overflowing life and drowsy tropical force of an abundant and healthily-poised womanhood. Writing to his sister-in-law, he says of this nameless person: "She is not a Cleopatra, but is, at least, a Charmian; she has a rich eastern look; she has fine eyes, and fine manners. When she comes into a room, she makes the same impression as the beauty of a leopardess. She is too fine and too conscious of herself to repulse any man who may address her. From habit, she thinks that *nothing particular*. I always find myself at ease with such a woman; the picture before me always gives me a life and animation which I cannot possibly feel with anything inferior. I am at such times too much occupied in admiring, to be awkward, or in a tremble. I forget myself entirely, because I live in her. You will by this time think I am in love with her, so, before I go any farther, I will tell you that I am not. She kept me awake one night, as a tune of Mozart's might do. I speak of the thing as a pastime and an amusement, than which I can feel none deeper than a conversation

with an imperial woman, the very *yes* and *no* of whose life is to me a banquet. . . . I like her and her like, because one has no *sensation*; what we both are, is taken for granted. . . . She walks across a room in such a manner that a man is drawn toward her with magnetic power. . . . I believe, though, she has faults, the same as a Cleopatra or a Charmian might have had. Yet she is a fine thing, speaking in a worldly way; for there are two distinct tempers of mind in which we judge of things: the worldly, theatrical, and pantomimical; and the unearthly, spiritual, and ethereal. In the former, Bonaparte, Lord Byron, and this Charmian hold the first place in our minds; in the latter, John Howard, Bishop Hooker, rocking his child's cradle, and you, my dear sister, are the conquering feelings. As a man of the world, I love the rich talk of a Charmian; as an eternal being, I love the thought of you. I should like her to ruin me, and I should like you to save me."

It is pleasant always to see Love hiding his head with such pains, while his whole body is so clearly visible, as in this extract. This lady, it seems, is not a Cleopatra, only a Charmian; but presently we find that she is imperial. He does not love her, but he would just like to be ruined by her, nothing more. This glimpse of her, with her leopardess beauty, crossing the room and drawing men after her magnetically, is all we have. She seems to have been still living in 1848, and, as Mr. Milnes tells us, kept the memory of the poet sacred. "She is an East Indian," Keats says, "and ought to be her grandfather's heir." Her name we do not know.

Between this time and the spring of 1820, he seems to have worked assiduously. Of course, worldly success was of more importance than ever.

He began *Hyperion*, but had given it up in September, 1819, because, as he said, "there were too many Miltonic inversions in it." He wrote *Lamia* after an attentive study of Dryden's versification. This period also produced the *Eve of St. Agnes*, *Isabella*, and the odes to the *Nightingale*, and to the *Grecian Urn*. He studied Italian, read Ariosto, and wrote part of a humorous poem, *The Cap and Bells*. He tried his hand at tragedy, and Mr. Milnes has published among his "Remains," *Otho the Great*, and all that was ever written of *King Stephen*. We think he did unwisely, for a biographer is hardly called upon to show how ill his *biographees* could do anything.

In the winter of 1820, he was chilled in riding on the top of a stage-coach, and came home in a state of feverish excitement. He was persuaded to go to bed, and in getting between the cold sheets, coughed slightly. "That is blood in my mouth," he said. "Bring me the candle; let me see this blood." It was of a brilliant red, and his medical knowledge enabled him to interpret the augury. Those narcotic odors that seem to breathe seaward, and steep in repose the senses of the voyager who is drifting toward the shore of the mysterious Other World, appeared to envelop him, and, looking up with sudden calmness, he said, "I know the color of that blood; it is arterial blood; I cannot be deceived in that color. That drop is my death-warrant; I must die."

There was a slight rally during the summer of that year, but toward autumn he grew worse again, and it was decided that he should go to Italy. He was accompanied thither by his friend, Mr. Severn, an artist. After embarking, he wrote to his friend, Mr. Brown. We give a part of this letter, which is so deeply tragic that the sentences we take almost seem to break away from the rest with a

cry of anguish, like the branches of Dante's lamentable wood.

“ I wish to write on subjects that will not agitate me much. There is one I must mention and have done with it. Even if my body would recover of itself, this would prevent it. The very thing which I want to live most for will be a great occasion of my death. I cannot help it. Who can help it? Were I in health it would make me ill, and how can I bear it in my state? I dare say you will be able to guess on what subject I am harping: you know what was my greatest pain during the first part of my illness at your house. I wish for death every day and night to deliver me from these pains, and then I wish death away, for death would destroy even those pains, which are better than nothing. Land and sea, weakness and decline, are great separators, but Death is the great divorcer forever. When the pang of this thought has passed through my mind, I may say the bitterness of death is passed. I often wish for you, that you might flatter me with the best. I think, without my mentioning it, for my sake, you would be a friend to Miss —— when I am dead. You think she has many faults, but for my sake think she has not one. If there is anything you can do for her by word or deed, I know you will do it. I am in a state at present in which woman, merely as woman, can have no more power over me than stocks and stones, and yet the difference of my sensations with respect to Miss —— and my sister is amazing: the one seems to absorb the other to a degree incredible. I seldom think of my brother and sister in America; the thought of leaving Miss —— is beyond everything horrible, — the sense of darkness coming over me, — I eternally see her figure eternally vanishing; some of the phrases she was in the habit of using during my

last nursing at Wentworth Place ring in my ears. Is there another life? Shall I awake and find all this a dream? There must be, — we cannot be created for this sort of suffering.”

To the same friend he writes again from Naples, (1st November, 1820):

“The persuasion that I shall see her no more will kill me. My dear Brown, I should have had her when I was in health, and I should have remained well. I can bear to die; I cannot bear to leave her. Oh, God! God! God! Everything I have in my trunks that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear. The silk lining she put in my travelling-cap scalds my head. My imagination is horribly vivid about her; I see her — I hear her. There is nothing in the world of sufficient interest to divert me from her a moment. This was the case when I was in England; I cannot recollect, without shuddering, the time that I was a prisoner at Hunt’s, and used to keep my eyes fixed on Hampstead all day. Then there was a good hope of seeing her again — Now! — O that I could be buried near where she lives! I am afraid to write to her — to receive a letter from her — to see her handwriting would break my heart — Even to hear of her anyhow, to see her name written, would be more than I can bear. My dear Brown, what am I to do? Where can I look for consolation or ease? If I had any chance of recovery, this passion would kill me. Indeed, through the whole of my illness, both at your house and at Kentish Town, this fever has never ceased wearing me out.”

The two friends went almost immediately from Naples to Rome, where Keats was treated with great kindness by the distinguished physician, Dr. (afterward Sir James) Clark.* But there was no hope

* The lodging of Keats was on the *Piazza di Spagna*, in the

from the first. His disease was beyond remedy, as his heart was beyond comfort. The very fact that life might be happy deepened his despair. He might not have sunk so soon, but the waves in which he was struggling looked only the blacker that they were shone upon by the signal-torch that promised safety, and love, and rest.

It is good to know that one of Keats's last pleasures was in hearing Severn read aloud from a volume of Jeremy Taylor. On first coming to Rome, he had bought a copy of Alfieri, but finding on the second page these lines,

Misera me ! sollievo a me non resta
Altro che il pianto, ed il pianto è delitto,

he laid down the book and opened it no more. On the 14th February, 1821, Severn speaks of a change that had taken place in him toward greater quietness and peace. He talked much, and fell at last into a sweet sleep, in which he seemed to have happy dreams. Perhaps he heard the soft footfall of the angel of Death, pacing to and fro under his window, to be his Valentine. That night he asked to have this epitaph inscribed upon his gravestone,

“HERE LIES ONE WHOSE NAME WAS WRIT IN WATER.”

On the 23d, he died, without pain and as if falling asleep. His last words were, “I am dying; I shall die easy; don't be frightened; be firm and thank God it has come!”

He was buried in the Protestant burial-ground at Rome, in that part of it which is now disused and secluded from the rest. A short time before his death, he told Severn that he thought his intensest pleasure in life had been to watch the growth of flowers; and once, after lying peacefully awhile, he

first house on the right hand in going up the *Scalinata*. Mr. Severn's Studio is said to have been in the *Cancello* over the garden-gate of the *Villa Negroni*, pleasantly familiar to all Americans as the Roman home of their countryman Crawford.

said, "I feel the flowers growing over me." His grave is marked by a little head-stone, on which are carved somewhat rudely his name and age, and the epitaph dictated by himself. No tree or shrub has been planted near it; but the daisies, faithful to their buried lover, crowd his small mound with a galaxy of their innocent stars, more prosperous than those under which he lived.

In person, Keats was below the middle height, with a head small in proportion to the breadth of his shoulders. His hair was brown and fine, falling in natural ringlets about a face in which energy and sensibility were remarkably mixed up. Every feature was delicately cut; the chin was bold; and about the mouth something of a pugnacious expression. His eyes were mellow and glowing, large, dark, and sensitive. At the recital of a noble action, or a beautiful thought, they would suffuse with tears, and his mouth trembled.* Haydon says that his eyes had an inward Delphian look that was perfectly divine.

The faults of Keats's poetry are obvious enough; but it should be remembered that he died at twenty-four, and that he offends by superabundance and not poverty. That he was overlanguageed at first there can be no doubt, and in this was implied the possibility of falling back to the perfect mean of diction. It is only by the rich that the costly plainness, which at once satisfies the taste and the imagination, is attainable.

Whether Keats was original or not we do not think it useful to discuss until it has been settled what originality is. Mr. Milnes tells us that this merit (whatever it is) has been denied to Keats, because his poems take the color of the authors he happened to be reading at the time he wrote them.

* Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography*, ii. 43.

But men have their intellectual ancestry, and the likeness of some one of them is forever unexpectedly flashing out in the features of a descendant, it may be after a gap of several generations. In the parliament of the present, every man represents a constituency of the past. It is true that Keats has the accent of the men from whom he learned to speak, but this is to make originality a mere question of externals, and in this sense the author of a dictionary might bring an action of trover against every author who used his words. It is the man behind the words that gives them value; and if Shakspeare help himself to a verse or a phrase, it is with ears that have learned of him to listen that we feel the harmony of the one, and it is the mass of his intellect that makes the other weighty with meaning. Enough that we recognize in Keats that undefinable newness and unexpectedness that we call genius. The sunset is original every evening, though for thousands of years it has built out of the same light and vapor its visionary cities with domes and pinnacles, and its delectable mountains which night shall utterly abase and destroy.

Three men, almost contemporaneous with each other, Wordsworth, Keats, and Byron, were the great means of bringing back English poetry from the sandy deserts of rhetoric, and recovering for her her triple inheritance of simplicity, sensuousness, and passion. Of these, Wordsworth was the only conscious reformer; and his hostility to the existing formalism injured his earlier poems by tingeing them with something of iconoclastic extravagance. He was the deepest thinker, Keats the most essentially a poet, and Byron the most keenly intellectual of the three. Keats had the broadest mind, or at least his mind was open in more sides, and he was able to understand Wordsworth and judge Byron, equally conscious, through his artistic

sense, of the greatneses of the one, and the many littlenesses of the other, while Wordsworth was isolated in a feeling of his prophetic character, and Byron had only an uneasy and jealous instinct of contemporary merit. The poems of Wordsworth, as he was the most individual, accordingly reflect the moods of his own nature; those of Keats, from sensitiveness of organization, the moods of his own taste and feeling; and those of Byron, who was impressible chiefly through the understanding, the intellectual and moral wants of the times in which he lived. Wordsworth has influenced most the ideas of succeeding poets; Keats their forms; and Byron, interesting to men of imagination less for his writings than for what his writings indicate, reappears no more in poetry, but presents an ideal to youth made restless with vague desires not yet regulated by experience nor supplied with motives by the duties of life.

As every young person goes through all the world-old experiences, fancying them something peculiar and personal to himself, so it is with every new generation, whose youth always finds its representatives in its poets. Keats rediscovered the delight and wonder that lay enchanted in the dictionary. Wordsworth revolted at the poetic diction which he found in vogue, but his own language rarely rises above it except when it is upborne by the thought. Keats had an instinct for fine words, which are in themselves pictures and ideas, and had more of the power of poetic expression than any modern English poet. And by poetic expression we do not mean merely a vividness in particulars, but the right feeling which heightens or subdues a passage or a whole poem to the proper tone, and gives entireness to the effect. There is a great deal more than is commonly supposed in this choice of words. Men's thoughts and opinions are in a great

degree vassals of him who invents a new phrase or reapplies an old epithet. The thought or feeling a thousand times repeated, becomes his at last who utters it best. This power of language is veiled in the old legends which make the invisible powers the servants of some word. As soon as we have discovered the word for our joy or sorrow, we are no longer its serfs, but its lords. We reward the discoverer of an anæsthetic for the body and make him member of all the societies, but him who finds a nepenthe for the soul we elect into the small academy of the immortals.

The poems of Keats mark an epoch in English poetry; for, however often we may find traces of it in others, in them found its strongest expression that reaction against the barrel-organ style which had been reigning by a kind of sleepy divine right for half a century. The lowest point was indicated when there was such an utter confounding of the common and the uncommon sense that Dr. Johnson wrote verse and Burke prose. The most profound gospel of criticism was, that nothing was good poetry that could not be translated into good prose, as if one should say that the test of sufficient moonlight was that tallow-candles could be made of it. We find Keats at first going to the other extreme, and endeavoring to extract green cucumbers from the rays of tallow; but we see also incontestable proof of the greatness and purity of his poetic gift in the constant return toward equilibrium and repose in his latter poems. And it is a repose always lofty and clear-aired, like that of the eagle balanced in incommunicable sunshine. In him a vigorous understanding developed itself in equal measure with the divine faculty; thought emancipated itself from expression without becoming its tyrant; and music and meaning floated together, accordant as swan and shadow, on the

smooth element of his verse. Without losing its sensuousness, his poetry refined itself and grew more inward, and the sensational was elevated into the typical by the control of that finer sense which underlies the senses and is the spirit of them.

J. R. L.

ENDYMION :

A POETIC ROMANCE.

INSCRIBED TO THE MEMORY OF

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

THE STRETCHED METRE OF AN ANTIQUE SONG.

PREFACE.



KNOWING within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good;—it will not; the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment; but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it; he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honor of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a

ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted; thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness; for I wish to try once more before I bid it farewell.

TEIGNMOUTH, *April 10, 1818.*

ENDYMION.

BOOK I.

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever :
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breath-
ing.

Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd ways
Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits.) Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in ; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season ; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms :
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead ;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read :
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour ; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,

The passion poesy, glories infinite,
 Haunt us till they become a cheering light
 Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
 That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
 They alway must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I
 Will trace the story of Endymion.
 The very music of the name has gone
 Into my being, and each pleasant scene
 Is growing fresh before me as the green
 Of our own valleys: so I will begin
 Now while I cannot hear the city's din;
 Now while the early budders are just new,
 And run in mazes of the youngest hue
 About old forests; while the willow trails
 Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails
 Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year
 Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer
 My little boat, for many quiet hours,
 With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.
 Many and many a verse I hope to write,
 Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,
 Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees
 Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
 I must be near the middle of my story.
 O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,
 See it half-finish'd: but let Autumn bold,
 With universal tinge of sober gold,
 Be all about me when I make an end.
 And now at once, adventuresome, I send
 My herald thought into a wilderness:
 There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress
 My uncertain path with green, that I may speed
 Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread
 A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed

So plenteously all weed-hidden roots
 Into o'erchanging boughs, and precious fruits.
 And it had gloomy shades, sequester'd deep,
 Where no man went ; and if from shepherd's keep
 A lamb stray'd far a-down those inmost glens,
 Never again saw he the happy pens
 Whither his brethren, bleating with content,
 Over the hills at every nightfall went.
 Among the shepherds 'twas believed ever,
 That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever
 From the white flock, but pass'd unworried
 By any wolf, or pard with prying head,
 Until it came to some unfooted plains
 Where fed the herds of Pan : ay, great his gains
 Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were
 many,
 Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny,
 And ivy banks ; all leading pleasantly
 To a wide lawn, whence one could only see
 Stems thronging all around between the swell
 Of tuft and slanting branches : who could tell
 The freshness of the space of heaven above,
 Edged round with dark tree-tops ? through which
 a dove
 Would often beat its wings, and often too
 A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness
 There stood a marble altar, with a tress
 Of flowers budded newly ; and the dew
 Had taken fairy phantasies to strew
 Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,
 And so the dawned light in pomp receive.
 For 'twas the morn : Apollo's upward fire
 Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
 Of brightness so unsullied, that therein
 A melancholy spirit well might win
 Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine

Into the winds: rain-scented eglantine
 Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun;
 The lark was lost in him; cold springs had run
 To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass;
 Man's voice was on the mountains; and the mass
 Of nature's lives and wonders pulsed tenfold,
 To feel this sun-rise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the dawn
 Were busiest, into that self-same lawn
 All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped
 A troop of little children garlanded;
 Who gathering round the altar, seem'd to pry
 Earnestly round as wishing to espy
 Some folk of holiday: nor had they waited
 For many moments, ere their ears were sated
 With a faint breath of music, which even then
 Fill'd out its voice, and died away again.
 Within a little space again it gave
 Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,
 To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking
 Through copse-clad valleys, — ere their death,
 o'ertaking
 The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we
 Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmer'd light
 Fair faces and a rush of garments white,
 Plainer and plainer showing, till at last
 Into the widest alley they all past,
 Making directly for the woodland altar.
 O kindly muse! let not my weak tongue falter
 In telling of this goodly company,
 Of their old piety, and of their glee:
 But let a portion of ethereal dew
 Fall on my head, and presently unmew
 My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,
 To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced along,
Bearing the burden of a shepherd's song;
Each having a white wicker, overbrimm'd
With April's tender younglings : next, well trimm'd,
A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt looks
As may be read of in Arcadian books;
Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,
When the great deity, for earth too ripe,
Let his divinity o'erflowing die
In music, through the vales of Thessaly :
Some idly trail'd their sheep-hooks on the ground,
And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound
With ebon-tipped flutes : close after these,
Now coming from beneath the forest trees,
A venerable priest full soberly,
Begirt with ministering looks : alway his eye
Steadfast upon the matted turf he kept,
And after him his sacred vestments swept.
From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-
white,
Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light ;
And in his left he held a basket full
Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull :
Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still
Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.
His aged head, crowned with beechen wreath,
Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth
Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd
Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud
Their share of the ditty. After them appear'd,
Up-follow'd by a multitude that rear'd
Their voices to the clouds, a fair-wrought car
Easily rolling so as scarce to mar
The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown :
Who stood therein did seem of great renown
Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,
Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown ;
And, for those simple times, his garments were

A chieftain king's ; beneath his breast, half bare,
 Was hung a silver bugle, and between
 His nery knees there lay a boar-spear keen.
 A smile was on his countenance ; he seem'd
 To common lookers-on like one who dream'd
 Of idleness in groves Elysian :
 But there were some who feelingly could scan
 A lurking trouble in his nether lip,
 And see that oftentimes the reins would slip
 Through his forgotten hands : then would they sigh,
 And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,
 Of logs piled solemnly.— Ah, well-a-day,
 Why should our young Endymion pine away !

Soon the assembly, in a circle ranged,
 Stood silent round the shrine : each look was
 changed

To sudden veneration : women meek
 Beckon'd their sons to silence ; while each cheek
 Of virgins bloom paled gently for slight fear.
 Endymion too, without a forest peer,
 Stood, wan, and pale, and with an awed face,
 Among his brothers of the mountain chase.
 In midst of all, the venerable priest
 Eyed them with joy from greatest to the least,
 And, after lifting up his aged hands,
 Thus spake he : “ Men of Latmos ! shepherd
 bands !

Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks :
 Whether descended from beneath the rocks
 That overtop your mountains ; whether come
 From valleys where the pipe is never dumb ;
 Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs
 Blue harebells lightly, and where prickly furze
 Buds lavish gold ; or ye, whose precious charge
 Nibble their fill at ocean's very marge,
 Whose mellow reeds are touch'd with sounds forlorn
 By the dim echoes of old Triton's horn :

Mothers and wives ! who day by day prepare
 The scrip, with needments, for the mountain air ;
 And all ye gentle girls who foster up
 Udderless lambs, and in a little cup
 Will put choice honey for a favour'd youth :
 Yea, every one attend ! for in good truth
 Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.
 Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than
 Night-swollen mushrooms ? Are not our wide
 plains
 Speckled with countless fleeces ? Have not rains
 Green'd over April's lap ? No howling sad
 Sickens our fearful ewes ; and we have had
 Great bounty from Endymion our lord.
 The earth is glad : the merry lark has pour'd
 His early song against yon breezy sky,
 That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity."

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap'd a spire
 Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire ;
 Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod
 With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.
 Now while the earth was drinking it, and while
 Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,
 And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright
 'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light
 Spread grayly eastward, thus a chorus sang :

" O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth hang
 From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
 Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
 Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness ;
 Who lovest to see the hamadryads dress
 Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken ;
 And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and
 hearken
 The dreary melody of bedded reeds —
 In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds

The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth,
 Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth
 Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx — do thou now,
 By thy love's milky brow !
 By all the trembling mazes that she ran,
 Hear us, great Pan !

“ O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles
 Passon their voices cooingly among myrtles,
 What time thou wanderest at eventide
 Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side
 Of thine enmossed realms : O thou, to whom
 Broad-leaved fig-trees even now foredoom
 Their ripen'd fruitage ; yellow-girted bees
 Their golden honeycombs ; our village leas
 Their fairest blossom'd beans and popped corn ;
 The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,
 To sing for thee ; low-creeping strawberries
 Their summer coolness ; pent-up butterflies
 Their freckled wings ; yea, the fresh-budding year
 All its completions — be quickly near,
 By every wind that nods the mountain pine,
 O forester divine !

“ Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies
 For willing service ; whether to surprise
 The squatted hare while in half-sleeping fit ;
 Or upward ragged precipices flit
 To save poor lambkins from the eagle's maw ;
 Or by mysterious enticement draw
 Bewilder'd shepherds to their path again ;
 Or to tread breathless round the frothy main,
 And gather up all fancifullest shells
 For thee to tumble into Naiads' cells,
 And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping ;
 Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
 The while they pelt each other on the crown
 With silvery oak-apples, and fir-cones brown —

By all the echoes that about thee ring,
Hear us, O satyr king!

“ O Harkener to the loud-clapping shears,
While ever and anon to his shorn peers
A ram goes bleating: Winder of the horn,
When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn
Anger our huntsman: Breather round our farms,
To keep off mildews, and all weather harms:
Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,
That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,
And wither drearily on barren moors:
Dread opener of the mysterious doors
Leading to universal knowledge — see,
Great son of Dryope,
The many that are come to pay their vows
With leaves about their brows!

“ Be still the unimaginable lodge
For solitary thinkings; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain: be still the leaven,
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth,
Gives it a touch ethereal — a new birth:
Be still a symbol of immensity:
A firmament reflected in a sea;
An element filling the space between;
An unknown — but no more: we humbly screen
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,
And giving out a shout most heaven-rending,
Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,
Upon thy Mount Lycean!”

Even while they brought the burden to a close,
A shout from the whole multitude arose,
That linger'd in the air like dying rolls
Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian shoals
Of dolphins bob their noses through the brine.

Until, from the horizon's vaulted side,
There shot a golden splendour far and wide,
Spangling those million poutings of the brine
With quivering ore : 'twas even an awful shine
From the exaltation of Apollo's bow ;
A heavenly beacon in their dreary woe.
Who thus were ripe for high contemplating,
Might turn their steps towards the sober ring
Where sat Endymion and the aged priest
'Mong shepherds gone in eld, whose looks increased
The silvery setting of their mortal star.
There they discoursed upon the fragile bar
That keeps us from our homes ethereal ;
And what our duties there : to nightly call
Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer weather ;
To summon all the downiest clouds together
For the sun's purple couch ; to emulate
In ministering the potent rule of fate
With speed of fire-tail'd exhalations ;
To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who cons
Sweet poesy by moonlight : besides these,
A world of other unguess'd offices.
Anon they wander'd, by divine converse,
Into Elysium ; vying to rehearse
Each one his own anticipated bliss.
One felt heart-certain that he could not miss
His quick-gone love, among fair blossom'd boughs,
Where every zephyr-sigh pouts, and endows
Her lips with music for the welcoming.
Another wish'd, 'mid that eternal spring,
To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,
Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond vales :
Who, suddenly, should stoop through the smooth
wind,
And with the balmiest leaves his temples bind ;
And, ever after, through those regions be
His messenger, his little Mercury.
Some were athirst in soul to see again

Their fellow-huntsmen o'er the wide champaign
 In times long past ; to sit with them, and talk
 Of all the chances in their earthly walk ;
 Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores
 Of happiness, to when upon the moors,
 Benighted, close they huddled from the cold,
 And shared their famish'd scrips. Thus all outtold
 Their fond imaginations, — saving him
 Whose eyelids curtain'd up their jewels dim,
 Endymion : yet hourly had he striven
 To hide the cankering venom, that had riven
 His fainting recollections. Now indeed
 His senses had swoon'd off : he did not heed
 The sudden silence, or the whispers low,
 Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe,
 Or anxious calls, or close of trembling palms,
 Or maiden's sigh, that grief itself embalms :
 But in the self-same fixed trance he kept,
 Like one who on the earth had never stept.
 Ay, even as dead-still as a marble man,
 Frozen in that old tale Arabian.

Who whispers him so pantingly and close ?
 Peona, his sweet sister : of all those,
 His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she made,
 And breathed a sister's sorrow to persuade
 A yielding up, a cradling on her care.
 Her eloquence did breathe away the curse :
 She led him, like some midnight spirit nurse
 Of happy changes in emphatic dreams,
 Along a path between two little streams, —
 Guarding his forehead, with her round elbow,
 From low-grown branches, and his footsteps slow
 From stumbling over stumps and hillocks small ;
 Until they came to where these streamlets fall,
 With mingled bubblings and a gentle rush,
 Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush
 With crystal mocking of the trees and sky.

A little shallop, floating there hard by,
 Pointed its beak over the fringed bank ;
 And soon it lightly dipt, and rose, and sank,
 And dipt again, with the young couple's weight, —
 Peona guiding, through the water straight,
 Towards a bowery island opposite ;
 Which gaining presently, she steered light
 Into a shady, fresh, and ripply cove,
 Where nested was an harbour, overwove
 By many a summer's silent fingering ;
 To whose cool bosom she was used to bring
 Her playmates, with their needle broidery,
 And minstrel memories of times gone by.

So she was gently glad to see him laid
 Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,
 On her own couch, new made of flower leaves,
 Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves
 When last the sun his autumn tresses shook,
 And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls took.
 Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest :
 But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest
 Peona's busy hand against his lips,
 And still, a-sleeping, held her finger-tips
 In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps
 A patient watch over the stream that creeps
 Windingly by it, so the quiet maid
 Held her in peace : so that a whispering blade
 Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling
 Down in the bluebells, or a wren light rustling
 Among sere leaves and twigs, might all be heard.

O magic sleep ! O comfortable bird,
 That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind
 Till it is hush'd and smooth ! O unconfined
 Restraint ! imprison'd liberty ! great key
 To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
 Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,

Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves
 And moonlight ; ay, to all the mazy world
 Of silvery enchantment ! — who, upfur'd
 Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,
 But renovates and lives ? — Thus, in the bower,
 Endymion was calm'd to life again.
 Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain,
 He said : “ I feel this thine endearing love
 All through my bosom : thou art as a dove
 Trembling its closed eyes and sleeked wings
 About me ; and the pearliest dew not brings
 Such morning incense from the fields of May,
 As do those brighter drops that twinkling stray
 From those kind eyes, — the very home and haunt
 Of sisterly affection. Can I want
 Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such tears ?
 Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears
 That, any longer, I will pass my days
 Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise
 My voice upon the mountain-heights ; once more
 Make my horn parley from their foreheads hoar :
 Again my trooping hounds their tongues shall loll
 Around the breathed boar : again I'll poll
 The fair grown yew-tree, for a chosen bow :
 And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,
 Again I'll linger in a sloping mead
 To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed
 Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered, sweet !
 And, if thy lute is here, softly entreat
 My soul to keep in its resolved course.”

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,
 Shut her pure sorrow-drops with glad exclaim,
 And took a lute, from which there pulsing came
 A lively prelude, fashioning the way
 In which her voice should wander. 'Twas a lay
 More subtle-cadenced, more forest wild
 Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child ;

And nothing since has floated in the air
 So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare
 Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand ;
 For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd
 The quick invisible strings, even though she saw
 Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw
 Before the deep intoxication.
 But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon
 Her self-possession — swung the lute aside,
 And earnestly said : " Brother, 'tis vain to hide
 That thou dost know of things mysterious,
 Immortal, starry ; such alone could thus
 Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinn'd in
 aught
 Offensive to the heavenly powers ? Caught
 A Paphian dove upon a message sent ?
 Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd bent,
 Sacred to Dian ? Haply, thou hast seen
 Her naked limbs among the alders green ;
 And that, alas ! is death. No, I can trace
 Something more high perplexing in thy face !"

Endymion look'd at her, and press'd her hand,
 And said, " Art thou so pale, who wast so bland
 And merry in our meadows ? How is this ?
 Tell me thine ailment : tell me all amiss !
 Ah ! thou hast been unhappy at the change
 Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed more
 strange ?
 Or more complete to overwhelm surmise ?
 Ambition is no sluggard : 'tis no prize,
 That toiling years would put within my grasp,
 That I have sigh'd for : with so deadly gasp
 No man e'er panted for a mortal love.
 So all have set my heavier grief above
 These things which happen. Rightly have they
 done :
 I, who still saw the horizontal sun

Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of the
 world,
 Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurl'd
 My spear aloft, as signal for the chase —
 I, who, for very sport of heart, would race
 With my own steed from Araby; pluck down
 A vulture from his towery perching; frown
 A lion into growling, loth retire —
 To lose, at once, all my toil-breeding fire,
 And sink thus low! but I will ease my breast
 Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest.

“ This river does not see the naked sky,
 Till it begins to progress silverly
 Around the western border of the wood,
 Whence, from a certain spot, its winding flood
 Seems at the distance like a crescent moon :
 And in that nook, the very pride of June,
 Had I been used to pass my weary eyes ;
 The rather for the sun unwilling leaves
 So dear a picture of his sovereign power,
 And I could witness his most kingly hour,
 When he doth tighten up the golden reins,
 And paces leisurely down amber plains
 His snorting four. Now when his chariot last
 Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,
 There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed
 Of sacred dittany, and poppies red :
 At which I wonder'd greatly, knowing well
 That but one night had wrought this flowery spell ;
 And, sitting down close by, began to muse
 What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I, Mor-
 pheus,
 In passing here, his owlet pinions shook ;
 Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook
 Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,
 Had dipp'd his rod in it : such garland wealth
 Came not by common growth. Thus on I thought,

Until my head was dizzy and distraught.
 Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole
 A breeze most softly lulling to my soul ;
 And shaping visions all about my sight
 Of colors, wings, and bursts of spangly light ;
 The which became more strange, and strange, and
 dim,

And then were gulf'd in a tumultuous swim :
 And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell
 The enchantment that afterwards befell ?
 Yet it was but a dream : yet such a dream
 That never tongue, although it overteem
 With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring,
 Could figure out and to conception bring
 All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay
 Watching the zenith, where the milky way
 Among the stars in virgin splendour pours ;
 And travelling my eye, until the doors
 Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,
 I became loth and fearful to alight
 From such high soaring by a downward glance :
 So kept me steadfast in that airy trance,
 Spreading imaginary pinions wide.
 When, presently, the stars began to glide,
 And faint away, before my eager view :
 At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,
 And dropp'd my vision to the horizon's verge ;
 And lo ! from opening clouds, I saw emerge
 The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er
 A shell for Neptune's goblet ; she did soar
 So passionately bright, my dazzled soul
 Commingling with her argent spheres did roll
 Through clear and cloudy, even when she went
 At last into a dark and vapoury tent —
 Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train
 Of planets all were in the blue again.
 To commune with those orbs, once more I raised
 My sight right upward : but it was quite dazed

By a bright something, sailing down apace,
 Making me quickly veil my eyes and face :
 Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,
 Who from Olympus watch our destinies !
 Whence that completed form of all completeness ?
 Whence came that high perfection of all sweet-
 ness ?

Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, O
 where

Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair ?
 Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun ;
 Not — thy soft hand, fair sister ! let me shun
 Such follying before thee — yet she had,
 Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad ;
 And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,
 Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,
 Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orb'd brow ;
 The which were blended in, I know not how,
 With such a paradise of lips and eyes,
 Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,
 That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings
 And plays about its fancy, till the stings
 Of human neighbourhood envenom all.
 Unto what awful power shall I call ?
 To what high fane, — Ah ! see her hovering feet,
 More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet,
 Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose
 From out her cradle shell. The wind out-blows
 Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion ;
 'Tis blue, and over-spangled with a million
 Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed,
 Over the darkest, lushest bluebell bed,
 Handfuls of daisies." — " Endymion, how strange !
 Dream within dream ! " — " She took an airy
 range,

And then, towards me, like a very maid,
 Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,
 And press'd me by the hand : Ah ! 'twas too much ;

Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,
 Yet held my recollection, even as one
 Who dives three fathoms where the waters run
 Gurgling in beds of coral : for anon,
 I felt upmounted in that region
 Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,
 And eagles struggle with the buffeting north
 That balances the heavy meteor-stone ; —
 Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone,
 But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous sky.
 Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying high,
 And straightway into frightful eddies swoop'd ;
 Such as aye muster where gray time has scoop'd
 Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's side :
 There hollow sounds aroused me, and I sigh'd
 To faint once more by looking on my bliss —
 I was distracted ; madly did I kiss
 The wooing arms which held me, and did give
 My eyes at once to death : but 'twas to live,
 To take in draughts of life from the gold fount
 Of kind and passionate looks ; to count, and count
 The moments, by some greedy help that seem'd
 A second self, that each might be redeem'd
 And plunder'd of its load of blessedness.
 Ah, desperate mortal ! I even dared to press
 Her very cheek against my crowned lip,
 And, at that moment, felt my body dip
 Into a warmer air : a moment more,
 Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store
 Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes
 A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,
 Loiter'd around us ; then of honey cells,
 Made delicate from all white-flower bells ;
 And once, above the edges of our nest,
 An arch face peep'd, — an Oread as I guess'd.

“ Why did I dream that sleep o'erpower'd me
 In midst of all this heaven ? Why not see,

Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,
And stare them from me? But no, like a spark
That needs must die, although its little beam
Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream
Fell into nothing — into stupid sleep.
And so it was, until a gentle creep,
A careful moving caught my waking ears,
And up I started: Ah! my sighs, my tears,
My clenched hands; — for lo! the poppies hung
Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung
A heavy ditty, and the sullen day
Had chidden herald Hesperus away,
With leaden looks: the solitary breeze
Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did tease
With wayward melancholy; and I thought,
Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it brought
Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus! —
Away I wander'd — all the pleasant hues
Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest shades
Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny glades
Were full of pestilent light; our taintless rills
Seem'd sooty, and o'erspread with upturn'd gills
Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns outgrown
Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird
Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd
In little journeys, I beheld in it
A disguised demon, missioned to knit
My soul with under darkness; to entice
My stumblings down some monstrous precipice:
Therefore I eager follow'd, and did curse
The disappointment. Time, that aged nurse,
Rock'd me to patience. Now, thank gentle heaven!
These things, with all their comfortings, are given
To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,
Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea
Of weary life."

Thus ended he, and both
Sat silent : for the maid was very loth
To answer ; feeling well that breathed words
Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as swords
Against the enchased crocodile, or leaps
Of grasshoppers against the sun. She weeps,
And wonders ; struggles to devise some blame ;
To put on such a look as would say, *Shame*
On this poor weakness ! but, for all her strife,
She could as soon have crush'd away the life
From a sick dove. At length, to break the pause,
She said with trembling chance : "Is this the cause ?
This all ? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas !
That one who through this middle earth should pass
Most like a sojourning demi-god, and leave
His name upon the harp-string, should achieve
No higher bard than simple maidenhood,
Singing alone, and fearfully, — how the blood
Left his young cheek ; and how he used to stray
He knew not where : and how he would say, *nay*,
If any said 'twas love : and yet 'twas love ;
What could it be but love ? How a ring-dove
Let fall a sprig of yew-tree in his path
And how he died : and then, that love doth scathe
The gentle heart, as northern blasts do roses ;
And then the ballad of his sad life closes
With sighs, and an alas ! — Endymion !
Be rather in the trumpet's mouth, — anon
Among the winds at large — that all may hearken !
Although, before the crystal heavens darken,
I watch and dote upon the silver lakes
Pictured in western cloudiness, that takes
The semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands,
Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted strands
With horses prancing o'er them, palaces
And towers of amethyst, — would I so tease
My pleasant days, because I could not mount
Into those regions ? The Morphean fount

Of that fine element that visions, dreams,
 And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams
 Into its airy channels with so subtle,
 So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,
 Circled a million times within the space
 Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a trace,
 A tinting of its quality : how light
 Must dreams themselves be ; seeing they're more
 slight

Than the mere nothing that engenders them !
 Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem
 Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick ?
 Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick
 For nothing but a dream ? " Hereat the youth
 Look'd up : a conflicting of shame and ruth
 Was in his plaited brow : yet his eyelids
 Widen'd a little, as when Zephyr bids
 A little breeze to creep between the fans
 Of careless butterflies : amid his pains
 He seem'd to taste a drop of manna-dew,
 Full palatable ; and a colour grew
 Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeful spake.

" Peona ! ever have I long'd to slake
 My thirst for the world's praises : nothing base,
 No merely slumberous phantasm, could unlace
 The stubborn canvas for my voyage prepared —
 Though now 'tis tatter'd ; leaving my bark bared
 And sullenly drifting : yet my higher hope
 Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope,
 To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.
 Wherein lies happiness ? In that which beck
 Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
 A fellowship with essence ; till we shine,
 Full alchemized, and free of space. Behold
 The clear religion of heaven ! Fold
 A rose-leaf round thy finger's taperness,
 And soothe thy lips : hist ! when the airy stress

Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,
 And with a sympathetic touch unbinds
 Æolian magic from their lucid wombs :
 Then old songs waken from enclouded tombs ;
 Old ditties sigh above their father's grave ;
 Ghosts of melodious prophesyings rave
 Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot ;
 Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,
 Where long ago a giant battle was ;
 And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass
 In every place where infant Orpheus slept.
 Feel we these things !—that moment have we
 stept

Into a sort of oneness, and our state
 Is like a floating spirit's. But there are
 Richer entanglements, enthralments far
 More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,
 To the chief intensity : the crown of these
 Is made of love and friendship, and sits high
 Upon the forehead of humanity.
 All its more ponderous and bulky worth
 Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth
 A steady splendour ; but at the tip-top,
 There hangs by unseen film, an orb'd drop
 Of light, and that is love : its influence
 Thrown in our eyes genders a novel sense,
 At which we start and fret : till in the end,
 Melting into its radiance, we blend,
 Mingle, and so become a part of it,—
 Nor with aught else can our souls interknit
 So wingedly : when we combine therewith,
 Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,
 And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.
 Ay, so delicious is the unsating food,
 That men, who might have tower'd in the van
 Of all the congregated world, to fan
 And winnow from the coming step of time
 All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime

Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,
 Have been content to let occasion die,
 Whilst they did sleep in love's Elysium.
 And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,
 Than speak against this ardent listlessness :
 For I have ever thought that it might bless
 The world with benefits unknowingly ;
 As does the nightingale, up-perched high,
 And cloister'd among cool and bunched leaves —
 She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives
 How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-gray hood.
 Just so may love, although 'tis understood
 The mere commingling of passionate breath,
 Produce more than our searching witnesseth :
 What I know not : but who, of men, can tell
 That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would
 swell

To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,
 The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,
 The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,
 The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
 Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,
 If human souls did never kiss and greet ?

“ Now, if this earthly love has power to make
 Men's being mortal, immortal ; to shake
 Ambition from their memories, and brim
 Their measure of content ; what merest whim,
 Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,
 To one, who keeps within his steadfast aim
 A love immortal, an immortal too.
 Look not so wilder'd ; for these things are true,
 And never can be born of atomies
 That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,
 Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I'm sure,
 My restless spirit never could endure
 To brood so long upon one luxury,
 Unless it did, though fearfully, espy

A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.
My sayings will the less obscured seem
When I have told thee how my waking sight
Has made me scruple whether that same night
Was pass'd in dreaming. Harken, sweet Peona!
Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,
Which we should see but for these darkening
boughs,

Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged brows
Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart,
And meet so nearly, that with wings outraught,
And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide
Past them, but he must brush on every side.
Some moulder'd steps lead into this cool cell,
Far as the slabbed margin of a well,
Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye
Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.
Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their stalks set
Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet
Edges them round, and they have golden pits:
'Twas there I got them, from the gaps and slits
In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my seat,
When all above was faint with mid-day heat.
And there in strife no burning thoughts to heed,
I'd bubble up the water through a reed;
So reaching back to boyhood: make me ships
Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder chips,
With leaves stuck in them; and the Neptune be
Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily,
When lovelorn hours had left me less a child,
I sat contemplating the figures wild
Of o'er-head clouds melting the mirror through.
Upon a day, while thus I watch'd, by flew
A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver;
So plainly character'd, no breeze would shiver
The happy chance: so happy, I was fain
To follow it upon the open plain,
And, therefore, was just going; when, behold!

A wonder, fair as any I have told —
 The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,
 Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap
 Through the cool depth. — It moved as if to flee —
 I started up, when lo! refreshfully,
 There came upon my face, in plenteous showers,
 Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and flowers,
 Wrapping all objects from my smother'd sight,
 Bathing my spirit in a new delight.
 Ay, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss
 Alone preserved me from the drear abyss
 Of death, for the fair form had gone again.
 Pleasure is oft a visitant; but pain
 Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth
 On the deer's tender haunches: late, and loth,
 'Tis scared away by slow returning pleasure.
 How sickening, how dark the dreadful leisure
 Of weary days, made deeper exquisite,
 By a foreknowledge of unslumbrous night!
 Like sorrow came upon me, heavier still,
 Than when I wander'd from the poppy hill:
 And a whole age of lingering moments crept
 Sluggishly by, ere more contentment swept
 Away at once the deadly yellow spleen.
 Yes, thrice have I this fair enchantment seen;
 Once more been tortured with renewed life.
 When last the wintry gusts gave over strife
 With the conquering sun of spring, and left the
 skies
 Warm and serene, but yet with moisten'd eyes
 In pity of the shatter'd infant buds, —
 That time thou didst adorn, with amber studs,
 My hunting-cap, because I laugh'd and smiled,
 Chatted with thee, and many days exiled
 All torment from my breast; — 'twas even then,
 Straying about, yet coop'd up in the den
 Of helpless discontent, — hurling my lance
 From place to place, and following at chance,

At last, by hap, through some young trees it struck,
 And, plashing among bedded pebbles, stuck
 In the middle of a brook, — whose silver ramble
 Down twenty little falls through reeds and bramble,
 Tracing along, it brought me to a cave,
 Whence it ran brightly forth, and white did lave
 The nether sides of mossy stones and rock, —
 'Mong which it gurgled blithe adieus, to mock
 Its own sweet grief at parting. Overhead,
 Hung a lush screen of drooping weeds, and spread
 Thick, as to curtain up some wood-nymph's home.
 ' Ah! impious mortal, whither do I roam!'
 Said I, low-voiced: ' Ah, whither! 'Tis the grot
 Of Proserpine, when Hell, obscure and hot,
 Doth her resign: and where her tender hands
 She dabbles on the cool and sluicy sands:
 Or 'tis the cell of Echo, where she sits,
 And babbles thorough silence, till her wits
 Are gone in tender madness, and anon,
 Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone
 Of sadness. O that she would take my vows,
 And breathe them sighingly among the boughs,
 To sue her gentle ears for whose fair head,
 Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their bed,
 And weave them dyingly — send honey-whispers
 Round every leaf, that all those gentle lispers
 May sigh my love unto her pitying!
 O charitable Echo! hear, and sing
 This ditty to her! — tell her' — So I stay'd
 My foolish tongue, and listening, half afraid,
 Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,
 And blushing for the freaks of melancholy.
 Salt tears were coming, when I heard my name)
 Most fondly lipp'd, and then these accents came:
 ' Endymion! the cave is secreter
 Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall stir
 No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light noise
 Of thy combing hand, the while it travelling cloys

And trembles through my labyrinthine hair.'
 At that oppress'd, I hurried in. — Ah! where
 Are those swift moments! Whither are they fled?
 I'll smile no more, Peona; nor will wed
 Sorrow, the way to death; but patiently
 Bear up against it: so farewell, sad sigh;
 And come instead demurest meditation,
 To occupy me wholly, and to fashion
 My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink.
 No more will I count over, link by link,
 My chain of grief: no longer strive to find
 A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind
 Blustering about my ears: ay, thou shalt see,
 Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be;
 What a calm round of hours shall make my days.
 There is a paly flame of hope that plays
 Where'er I look: but yet, I'll say 'tis nought —
 And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,
 Already, a more healthy countenance?
 By this the sun is setting; we may chance
 Meet some of our near-dwellers with my car."

This said, he rose, faint-smiling, like a star
 Through autumn mists, and took Peona's hand!
 They stept into the boat, and launch'd from land.

BOOK II.

O SOVEREIGN power of love! O grief! O balm!
 All records, saving thine, come cool, and calm,
 And shadowy, through the mist of passed years:
 For others, good or bad, hatred and tears
 Have become indolent; but touching thine,
 One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth pine,
 One kiss brings honey-dew from buried days.

The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their
blaze,
Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,
Struggling, and blood, and shrieks — all dimly fades
Into some backward corner of the brain ;
Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain
The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.
Hence, pageant history ! hence, gilded cheat !
Swart planet in the universe of deeds !
Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds
Along the pebbled shore of memory !
Many old rotten-timber'd boats there be
Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified
To goodly vessels ; many a sail of pride,
And golden-keel'd, is left unlaunch'd and dry.
But wherefore this ? What care, though owl did fly
About the great Athenian admiral's mast ?
What care, though striding Alexander past
The Indus with his Macedonian numbers ?
Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers
The gluttoned Cyclops, what care ? — Juliet leaning
Amid her window-flowers, — sighing, — weaning
Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,
Doth more avail than these : the silver flow
Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,
Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,
Are things to brood on with more ardency
Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully
Must such conviction come upon his head,
Who, thus far, discontent, has dared to tread,
Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,
The path of love and poesy. But rest,
In chafing restlessness, is yet more drear
Than to be crush'd, in striving to uprear
Love's standard on the battlements of song.
So once more days and nights aid me along,
Like legion'd soldiers.

Brain-sick shepherd-prince !

What promise hast thou faithful guarded since
The day of sacrifice ? Or, have new sorrows
Come with the constant dawn upon thy morrows
Alas ! 'tis his old grief. For many days,
Has he been wandering in uncertain ways :
Through wilderness, and woods of mossed oaks ;
Counting his woe-worn minutes, by the strokes
Of the lone wood-cutter ; and listening still,
Hour after hour, to each lush-leaved rill.
Now he is sitting by a shady spring,
And elbow-deep with feverous fingering
Stems the upbursting cold : a wild rose-tree
Pavilions him in bloom, and he doth see
A bud which snares his fancy : lo ! but now
He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water : how !
It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his sight ;
And, in the middle, there is softly pight
A golden butterfly ; upon whose wings
There must be surely character'd strange things,
For with wide eye he wonders, and smiles oft.

Lightly this little herald flew aloft,
Follow'd by glad Endymion's clasped hands :
Onward it flies. From languor's sullen bands
His limbs are loosed, and eager, on he hies
Dazzled to trace it in the sunny skies.
It seem'd he flew, the way so easy was ;
And like a new-born spirit did he pass
Through the green evening quiet in the sun,
O'er many a heath, through many a woodland dun,
Through buried paths, where sleepy twilight dreams
The summer time away. One track unseams
A wooded cleft, and, far away, the blue
Of ocean fades upon him ; then, anew,
He sinks adown a solitary glen,
Where there was never sound of mortal men,
Saving, perhaps, some snow-light cadences

Melting to silence, when upon the breeze
Some holy bark let forth an anthem sweet,
To cheer itself to Delphi. Still his feet
Went swift beneath the merry-winged guide,
Until it reach'd a splashing fountain's side
That, near a cavern's mouth, for ever pour'd
Unto the temperate air ; then high it soar'd,
And, downward, suddenly began to dip,
As if, athirst with so much toil, 'twould sip
The crystal spout-head : so it did, with touch
Most delicate, as though afraid to smutch,
Even with mealy gold, the waters clear.
But, at that very touch, to disappear
So fairy-quick, was strange ! Bewildered,
Endymion sought around, and shook each bed
Of covert flowers in vain ; and then he flung
Himself along the grass. What gentle tongue,
What whisperer, disturb'd his gloomy rest ?
It was a nymph uprisen to the breast
In the fountain's pebbly margin, and she stood
'Mong lilies, like the youngest of the brood.
To him her dripping hand she softly kist,
And anxiously began to plait and twist
Her ringlets round her fingers, saying : " Youth !
Too long, alas, hast thou starved on the ruth,
The bitterness of love : too long indeed,
Seeing thou art so gentle. Could I weed
Thy soul of care, by heavens, I would offer
All the bright riches of my crystal coffer
To Amphitrite ; all my clear-eyed fish,
Golden, or rainbow-sided, or purplish,
Vermilion-tail'd, or finn'd with silvery gauze ;
Yea, or my veined pebble-floor, that draws
A virgin-light to the deep ; my grotto-sands,
Tawny and gold, oozed slowly from far lands
By my diligent springs ; my level lilies, shells,
My charming-rod, my potent river spells ;
Yes, every thing, even to the pearly cup

Meander gave me, — for I bubbled up
 To fainting creatures in a desert wild.
 But woe is me, I am but as a child
 To gladden thee ; and all I dare to say,
 Is, that I pity thee ; that on this day
 I've been thy guide ; that thou must wander far
 In other regions, past the scanty bar
 To mortal steps, before thou canst be ta'en
 From every wasting sigh, from every pain,
 Into the gentle bosom of thy love.
 Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above :
 But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewell !
 I have a ditty for my hollow cell."

Hereat she vanish'd from Endymion's gaze,
 Who brooded o'er the water in amaze :
 The dashing fount pour'd on, and where its pool
 Lay, half asleep, in grass and rushes cool,
 Quick waterflies and gnats were sporting still,
 And fish were dimpling, as if good nor ill
 Had fallen out that hour. The wanderer,
 Holding his forehead, to keep off the burr
 Of smothering fancies, patiently sat down ;
 And, while beneath the evening's sleepy frown
 Glowworms began to trim their starry lamps,
 Thus breathed he to himself : " Whoso encamps
 To take a fancied city of delight,
 O what a wretch is he ! and when 'tis his,
 After long toil and travelling, to miss
 The kernel of his hopes, how more than vile !
 Yet, for him there's refreshment even in toil :
 Another city doth he set about,
 Free from the smallest pebble-bead of doubt
 That he will seize on trickling honey-combs :
 Alas ! he finds them dry ; and then he foams,
 And onward to another city speeds.
 But this is human life : the war, the deeds,
 The disappointment, the anxiety,

Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,
All human ; bearing in themselves this good,
That they are still the air, the subtle food,
To make us feel existence, and to show
How quiet death is. Where soil is, men grow,
Whether to weeds or flowers ; but for me,
There is no depth to strike in : I can see
Nought earthly worth my compassing ; so stand
Upon a misty, jutting head of land —
Alone ? No, no ; and by the Orphean lute,
When mad Eurydice is listening to 't,
I'd rather stand upon this misty peak,
With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek,
But the soft shadow of my thrice-seen love,
Than be — I care not what. O meekest dove
Of heaven ! O Cynthia, ten-times bright and fair !
From thy blue throne, now filling all the air,
Glance but one little beam of temper'd light
Into my bosom, that the dreadful might
And tyranny of love be somewhat scared !
Yet do not so, sweet queen ; one torment spared,
Would give a pang to jealous misery,
Worse than the torment's self : but rather tie
Large wings upon my shoulders, and point out
My love's far dwelling. Though the playful rout
Of Cupids shun thee, too divine art thou,
Too keen in beauty, for thy silver prow
Not to have dipp'd in love's most gentle stream.
O be propitious, nor severely deem
My madness impious ; for, by all the stars
That tend thy bidding, I do think the bars
That kept my spirit in are burst — that I
Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky !
How beautiful thou art ! The world how deep !
How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep
Around their axle ! Then these gleaming reins,
How lithe ! When this thy chariot attains
Its airy goal, haply some bower veils

Those twilight eyes? Those eyes! — my spirit
fails;

Dear goddess, help! or the wide gaping air
Will gulf me — help! — At this, with madden'd
stare,

And lifted hands, and trembling lips, he stood;
Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,
Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.

And, but from the deep cavern there was borne
A voice, he had been froze to senseless stone;
Nor sigh of his, nor plaint, nor passion'd moan
Had more been heard. Thus swell'd it forth:

“ Descend,

Young mountaineer! descend where alleys bend
Into the sparry hollows of the world!

Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder hurl'd
As from thy threshold; day by day hast been

A little lower than the chilly sheen

Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms

Into the deadening ether that still charms

Their marble being: now, as deep profound

As those are high, descend! He ne'er is crown'd

With immortality, who fears to follow

Where airy voices lead: so through the hollow,

The silent mysteries of earth, descend!”

He heard but the last words, nor could contend

One moment in reflection: for he fled

Into the fearful deep, to hide his head

From the clear moon, the trees, and coming mad-
ness.

’Twas far too strange, and wonderful for sadness;

Sharpening, by degrees, his appetite

To dive into the deepest. Dark, nor light,

The region; nor bright, nor sombre wholly,

But mingled up; a gleaming melancholy;

A dusky empire and its diadems;

One faint eternal eventide of gems.
 Ay, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,
 Along whose track the prince quick footsteps told,
 With all its lines abrupt and angular :
 Out-shooting sometimes, like a meteor star,
 Through a vast antre ; then the metal woof
 Like vulcan's rainbow, with some monstrous roof
 Curves hugely : now, far in the deep abyss,
 It seems an angry lightning, and doth hiss
 Fancy into belief : anon it leads
 Through winding passages, where sameness breeds
 Vexing conceptions of some sudden change ;
 Whether to silver grots, or giant range
 Of sapphire columns, or fantastic bridge
 Athwart a flood of crystal. On a ridge
 Now fareth he, that o'er the vast beneath
 Towers like an ocean-cliff, and whence he seeth
 A hundred waterfalls, whose voices come
 But as the murmuring surge. Chilly and numb
 His bosom grew, when first he, far away,
 Described an orb'd diamond, set to fray
 Old Darkness from his throne : 'twas like the sun
 Uprisen o'er chaos : and with such a stun
 Came the amazement, that, absorb'd in it,
 He saw not fiercer wonders — past the wit
 Of any spirit to tell, but one of those
 Who, when this planet's sphering time doth close,
 Will be its high remembrancers : who they ? -
 The mighty ones who have made eternal day
 For Greece and England. While astonishment
 With deep-drawn sighs was quieting, he went
 Into a marble gallery, passing through
 A mimic temple, so complete and true
 In sacred custom, that he well nigh fear'd
 To search it inwards ; whence far off appear'd,
 Through a long pillar'd vista, a fair shrine,
 And, just beyond, on light tiptoe divine,
 A quiver'd Dian. Stepping awfully,

The youth approach'd ; oft turning his veil'd eye
 Down sidelong aisles, and into niches old :
 And, when more near against the marble cold
 He had touch'd his forehead, he began to thread
 All courts and passages, where silence dead,
 Roused by his whispering footsteps, murmur'd faint
 And long he traversed to and fro, to acquaint
 Himself with every mystery, and awe ;
 Till, weary, he sat down before the maw
 Of a wide outlet, fathomless and dim,
 To wild uncertainty and shadows grim.
 There, when new wonders ceased to float before,
 And thoughts of self came on, how crude and sore
 The journey homeward to habitual self !
 A mad pursuing of the fog-born elf,
 Whose flitting lantern, through rude nettle-brier,
 Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,
 Into the bosom of a hated thing.

What misery most drowningly doth sing
 In lone Endymion's ear, now he has caught
 The goal of consciousness ? Ah, 'tis the thought,
 The deadly feel of solitude : for lo !
 He cannot see the heavens, nor the flow
 Of rivers, nor hill-flowers running wild
 In pink and purple chequer, nor, up-piled,
 The cloudy rack slow journeying in the west,
 Like herded elephants ; nor felt, nor prest
 Cool grass, nor tasted the fresh slumberous air ;
 But far from such companionship to wear
 An unknown time, surcharged with grief, away,
 Was now his lot. And must he patient stay,
 Tracing fantastic figures with his spear ?
 " No ! " exclaim'd he, " why should I tarry here ? "
 No ! loudly echoed times innumerable.
 At which he straightway started, and 'gan tell
 His paces back into the temple's chief ;
 Warming and glowing strong in the belief

Of help from Dian : so that when again
 He caught her airy form, thus did he plain,
 Moving more near the while : " O Haunter chaste
 Of river sides, and woods, and heathy waste,
 Where with thy silver bow and arrows keen
 Art thou now forested ? O woodland Queen,
 What smoothest air thy smoother forehead woos ?
 Where dost thou listen to the wide halloos
 Of thy departed nymphs ? Through what dark tree
 Glimmers thy crescent ? Wheresoe'er it be,
 'Tis in the breath of heaven : thou dost taste
 Freedom as none can taste it, nor dost waste
 Thy loveliness in dismal elements ;
 But, finding in our green earth sweet contents,
 There livest blissfully. Ah, if to thee
 It feels Elysian, how rich to me,
 An exiled mortal, sounds its pleasant name !
 Within my breast there lives a choking flame —
 O let me cool it zephyr-boughs among !
 A homeward fever parches up my tongue —
 O let me slake it at the running springs !
 Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings —
 O let me once more hear the linnet's note !
 Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float —
 O let me 'noint them with the heaven's light !
 Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white ?
 O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice !
 Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-juice ?
 O think how this dry palate would rejoice !
 If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,
 O think how I should love a bed of flowers ! —
 Young goddess ! let me see my native bowers !
 Deliver me from this rapacious deep ! "

Thus ending loudly, as he would o'erleap
 His destiny, alert he stood : but when
 Obstinate silence came heavily again,
 Feeling about for its old couch of space

And airy cradle, lowly bow'd his face,
 Desponding, o'er the marble floor's cold thrill.
 But 'twas not long; for, sweeter than the rill
 To its old channel, or a swollen tide
 To margin shallows, were the leaves he spied,
 And flowers, and wreaths, and ready myrtle crowns
 Upheaping through the slab: refreshment drowns
 Itself, and strives its own delights to hide —
 Nor in one spot alone; the floral pride
 In a long whispering birth enchanted grew
 Before his footsteps; as when heaved anew
 Old ocean rolls a lengthen'd wave to the shore,
 Down whose green back the short-lived foam, all
 hoar,
 Bursts gradual, with a wayward indolence.

Increasing still in heart, and pleasant sense,
 Upon his fairy journey on he hastes;
 So anxious for the end, he scarcely wastes
 One moment with his hand among the sweets:
 Onward he goes — he stops — his bosom beats
 As plainly in his ear as the faint charm
 Of which the throbs were born. This still alarm,
 This sleepy music, forced him walk tiptoe:
 For it came more softly than the east could blow
 Arion's magic to the Atlantic isles;
 Or than the west, made jealous by the smiles
 Of throned Apollo, could breathe back the lyre
 To seas Ionian and Tyrian.

O did he ever live, that lonely man,
 Who loved — and music slew not? 'Tis the pest
 Of love, that fairest joys give most unrest;
 That things of delicate and tenderest worth
 Are swallow'd all, and made a seared dearth,
 By one consuming flame: it doth immerse
 And suffocate true blessings in a curse.
 Half-happy, by comparison of bliss,

Is miserable. 'Twas even so with this
Dew-dropping melody, in the Carian's ear ;
First heaven, then hell, and then forgotten clear,
Vanish'd in elemental passion.

And down some swart abysm he had gone,
Had not a heavenly guide benignant led
To where thick myrtle branches, 'gainst his head
Brushing, awaken'd : then the sounds again
Went noiseless as a passing noontide rain
Over a bower, where little space he stood ;
For as the sunset peeps into a wood,
So saw he panting light, and towards it went
Through winding alleys ; and lo, wonderment !
Upon soft verdure saw, one here, one there,
Cupids a-slumbering on their pinions fair.

After a thousand mazes overgone,
At last, with sudden step, he came upon
A chamber, myrtle-wall'd, embower'd high,
Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy,
And more of beautiful and strange beside :
For on a silken couch of rosy pride,
In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth
Of fondest beauty ; fonder, in fair sooth,
Than sighs could fathom, or contentment reach :
And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach,
Or ripe October's faded marigolds,
Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds —
Not hiding up an Apollonian curve
Of neck and shoulder, nor the tenting swerve
Of knee from knee, nor ankles pointing light ;
But rather, giving them to the fill'd sight
Officiously. Sideway his face reposed
On one white arm, and tenderly unclosed,
By tenderest pressure, a faint damask mouth
To slumbery pout ; just as the morning south
Disparts a dew-lipp'd rose. Above his head,

Four lily stalks did their white honours wed
 To make a coronal ; and round him grew
 All tendrils green, of every bloom and hue,
 Together intertwined and trammell'd fresh :
 The vine of glossy sprout ; the ivy mesh,
 Shading its Ethiop berries ; and woodbine,
 Of velvet-leaves and bugle-blooms divine ;
 Convolvulus in streaked vases flush ;
 The creeper, mellowing for an autumn blush ;
 And virgin's bower, trailing airily ;
 With others of the sisterhood. Hard by,
 Stood serene Cupids watching silently.
 One, kneeling to a lyre, touch'd the strings,
 Muffling to death the pathos with his wings ;
 And, ever and anon, uprose to look
 At the youth's slumber ; while another took
 A willow bough, distilling odorous dew,
 And shook it on his hair ; another flew
 In through the woven roof, and fluttering-wise
 Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

At these enchantments, and yet many more,
 The breathless Latmian wonder'd o'er and o'er ;
 Until impatient in embarrassment,
 He forthright pass'd, and lightly treading went
 To that same feather'd lyrist, who straightway,
 Smiling, thus whisper'd : " Though from upper day
 Thou art a wanderer, and thy presence here
 Might seem unholy, be of happy cheer !
 For 'tis the nicest touch of human honour,
 When some ethereal and high-favouring donor
 Presents immortal bowers to mortal sense ;
 As now 'tis done to thee, Endymion. Hence
 Was I in no wise startled. So recline
 Upon these living flowers. Here is wine,
 Alive with sparkles — never, I aver,
 Since Ariadne was a vintager,
 So cool a purple : taste these juicy pears,

Sent me by sad Vertumnus, when his fears
Were high about Pomona : here is cream,
Deepening to richness from a snowy gleam ;
Sweeter than that nurse Amalthea skimm'd
For the boy Jupiter : and here, undimm'd
By any touch, a bunch of blooming plums
Ready to melt between an infant's gums :
And here is manna pick'd from Syrian trees,
In starlight, by the three Hesperides.
Feast on, and meanwhile I will let thee know
Of all these things around us." He did so,
Still brooding o'er the cadence of his lyre ;
And thus : " I need not any hearing tire
By telling how the sea-born goddess pined
For a mortal youth, and how she strove to bind
Him all in all unto her doating self.
Who would not be so prison'd ? but, fond elf,
He was content to let her amorous plea
Faint through his careless arms ; content to see
An unseized heaven dying at his feet ;
Content, O fool ! to make a cold retreat,
When on the pleasant grass such love, lovelorn,
Lay sorrowing ; when every tear was born
Of diverse passion ; when her lips and eyes
Were closed in sullen moisture, and quick sighs
Came vex'd and pettish through her nostrils small.
Hush ! no exclaim — yet, justly might'st thou call
Curses upon his head. — I was half glad,
But my poor mistress went distract and mad,
When the boar tusk'd him : so away she flew
To Jove's high throne, and by her plainings drew
Immortal tear-drops down the thunderer's beard ;
Whereon, it was decreed he should be rear'd
Each summer-time to life. Lo ! this is he,
That same Adonis, safe in the privacy
Of this still region all his winter-sleep.
Ay, sleep ; for when our love-sick queen did weep
Over his waned corse, the tremulous shower

Heal'd up the wound, and, with a balmy power,
 Medicin'd death to a lengthen'd drowsiness :
 The which she fills with visions, and doth dress
 In all this quiet luxury ; and bath set
 Us young immortals, without any let,
 To watch his slumber through. 'Tis well nigh
 pass'd,

Even to a moment's filling up, and fast
 She scuds with summer breezes, to pant through
 The first long kiss, warm firstling, to renew
 Embower'd sports in Cytherea's isle.
 Look, how those winged listeners all this while
 Stand anxious : see ! behold ! " — This clamant word
 Broke through the careful silence ; for they heard
 A rustling noise of leaves, and out there flutter'd
 Pigeons and doves : Adonis something mutter'd,
 The while one hand, that erst upon his thigh
 Lay dormant, moved convulsed and gradually
 Up to his forehead. Then there was a hum
 Of sudden voices, echoing, " Come ! come !
 Arise ! awake ! Clear summer has forth walk'd
 Unto the clover-sward, and she has talk'd
 Full soothingly to every nested finch :
 Rise, Cupids ! or we'll give the bluebell pinch
 To your dimpled arms. Once more sweet life be-
 gin ! "

At this, from every side they hurried in,
 Rubbing their sleepy eyes with lazy wrists,
 And doubling overhead their little fists
 In backward yawns. But all were soon alive :
 For as delicious wine doth, sparkling, dive
 In nectar'd clouds and curls through water fair,
 So from the arbour roof down swell'd an air
 Odorous and enlivening ; making all
 To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call
 For their sweet queen : when lo ! the wreathed
 green
 Disparted, and far upward could be seen

Blue heaven, and a silver car, air-borne,
 Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn,
 Spun off a drizzling dew, — which falling chill
 On soft Adonis' shoulders, made him still
 Nestle and turn uneasily about.
 Soon were the white doves plain, with necks
 stretch'd out,
 And silken traces lighten'd in descent ;
 And soon, returning from love's banishment,
 Queen Venus leaning downward open-arm'd :
 Her shadow fell upon his breast, and charm'd
 A tumult to his heart, and a new life
 Into his eyes. Ah, miserable strife,
 But for her comforting ! unhappy sight,
 But meeting her blue orbs ! Who, who can write
 Of these first minutes ? The unchariest muse
 To embracements warm as theirs makes coy excuse.

O it has ruffled every spirit there,
 Saving love's self, who stands superb to share
 The general gladness : awfully he stands ;
 A sovereign quell is in his waving hands ;
 No sight can bear the lightning of his bow ;
 His quiver is mysterious, none can know
 What themselves think of it ; from forth his eyes
 There darts strange light of varied hues and dyes
 A scowl is sometimes on his brow, but who
 Look full upon it feel anon the blue
 Of his fair eyes run liquid through their souls.
 Endymion feels it, and no more controls
 The burning prayer within him ; so, bent low,
 He had begun a plaining of his woe.
 But Venus, bending forward, said : “ My child,
 Favour this gentle youth ; his days are wild
 With love — he — but alas ! too well I see
 Thou know'st the deepness of his misery.
 Ah ! smile not so, my son : I tell thee true,
 That when through heavy hours I used to rue

The endless sleep of this new-born Adon',
 This stranger eye I pitied. For upon
 A dreary morning once I fled away
 Into the breezy clouds, to weep and pray
 For this my love : for vexing Mars had teased
 Me even to tears : thence, when a little eased,
 Down-looking, vacant, through a hazy wood,
 I saw this youth as he despairing stood :
 Those same dark curls blown vagrant in the wind ;
 Those same full fringed lids a constant blind
 Over his sullen eyes : I saw him throw
 Himself on wither'd leaves, even as though
 Death had come sudden ; for no jot he moved,
 Yet mutter'd wildly. I could hear he loved
 Some fair immortal, and that his embrace
 Had zoned her through the night. There is no
 trace

Of this in heaven : I have mark'd each cheek,
 And find it is the vainest thing to seek ;
 And that of all things 'tis kept secretest.
 Endymion ! one day thou wilt be blest :
 So still obey the guiding hand that fends
 Thee safely through these wonders for sweet ends.
 'Tis a concealment needful in extreme ;
 And if I guess'd not so, the sunny beam
 Thou shouldst mount up to with me. Now adieu !
 Here must we leave thee." — At these words up flew
 The impatient doves, up rose the floating car,
 Up went the hum celestial. High afar
 The Latmain saw them minish into nought ;
 And, when all were clear vanish'd, still he caught
 A vivid lightning from that dreadful bow.
 When all was darken'd, with Ætnean throe
 The earth closed — gave a solitary moan —
 And left him once again in twilight lone.

He did not rave, he did not stare aghast,
 For all those visions were o'ergone, and past,

And he in loneliness : he felt assured
Of happy times, when all he had endured
Would seem a feather to the mighty prize.
So, with unusual gladness, on he hies
Through caves, and palaces of mottled ore,
Gold dome, and crystal wall, and turquois floor,
Black polish'd porticos of awful shade,
And, at the last, a diamond balustrade,
Leading afar past wild magnificence,
Spiral through ruggedest loopholes, and thence
Stretching across a void, then guiding o'er
Enormous chasms, where all foam and roar,
Streams subterranean tease their granite beds ;
Then heighten'd just above the silvery heads
Of a thousand fountains, so that he could dash
The waters with his spear ; but at the splash,
Done heedlessly, those spouting columns rose
Sudden a poplar's height, and gan to inclose
His diamond path with fretwork streaming round
Alike, and dazzling cool, and with a sound,
Haply, like dolphin tumults, when sweet shells
Welcome the float of Thetis. Long he dwells
On this delight ; for, every minute's space,
The streams with changed magic interlace :
Sometimes like delicatest lattices,
Cover'd with crystal vines ; then weeping trees,
Moving about as in a gentle wind,
Which, in a wink, to watery gauze refined,
Pour'd into shapes of curtain'd canopies,
Spangled, and rich with liquid broideries
Of flowers, peacocks, swans, and naiads fair.
Swifter than lightning went these wonders rare ;
And then the water, into stubborn streams
Collecting, mimick'd the wrought oaken beams,
Pillars, and frieze, and high fantastic roof,
Of those dusk places in times far aloof
Cathedrals call'd. He bade a loath farewell
To these founts Protean, passing gulf, and dell,

And torrent, and ten thousand jutting shapes,
 Half seen through deepest gloom, and grisly gapes,
 Blackening on every side, and overhead
 A vaulted dome like heaven's far bespread
 With starlight gems : ay, all so huge and strange,
 The solitary felt a hurried change
 Working within him into something dreary, —
 Vex'd like a morning eagle, lost and weary,
 And purblind amid foggy midnight wolds.
 But he revives at once : for who beholds
 New sudden things, nor casts his mental slough ?
 Forth from a rugged arch, in the dusk below,
 Came mother Cybele ! alone — alone —
 In sombre chariot ; dark foldings thrown
 About her majesty, and front death-pale,
 With turrets crown'd. Four maned lions hale
 The sluggish wheels ; solemn their toothed maws,
 Their surly eyes brow-hidden, heavy paws
 Uplifted drowsily, and nervy tails
 Cowering their tawny brushes. Silent sails
 This shadowy queen athwart, and faints away
 In another gloomy arch.

Wherefore delay,
 Young traveller, in such a mournful place ?
 Art thou wayworn, or canst not further trace
 The diamond path ? And does it indeed end
 Abrupt in middle air ? Yet earthward bend
 Thy forehead, and to Jupiter cloud-borne
 Call ardently ! He was indeed wayworn ;
 Abrupt, in middle air, his way was lost ;
 To cloud-borne Jove he bow'd, and there crost
 Towards him a large eagle, 'twixt whose wings,
 Without one impious word, himself he flings,
 Committed to the darkness and the gloom :
 Down, down, uncertain to what pleasant doom,
 Swift as a fathoming plummet down he fell
 Through unknown things ; till exhaled asphodel,

And rose, with spicy fannings interbreathed,
Came swelling forth where little caves were
wreathed

So thick with leaves and mosses, that they seem'd
Large honeycombs of green, and freshly teem'd
With airs delicious. In the greenest nook
The eagle landed him, and farewell took.

It was a jasmine bower, all bestrown
With golden moss. His every sense had grown
Ethereal for pleasure; 'bove his head
Flew a delight half-graspable; his tread
Was Hesperean; to his capable ears
Silence was music from the holy spheres;
A dewy luxury was in his eyes;
The little flowers felt his pleasant sighs
And stirr'd them faintly. Verdant cave and cell
He wander'd through, oft wondering at such swell
Of sudden exaltation: but, "Alas!"
Said he, "will all this gush of feeling pass
Away in solitude? And must they wane,
Like melodies upon a sandy plain,
Without an echo? Then shall I be left
So sad, so melancholy, so bereft!
Yet still I feel immortal! O my love,
My breath of life, where art thou? High above,
Dancing before the morning gates of heaven?
Or keeping watch among those starry seven,
Old Atlas' children? Art a maid of the waters,
One of shell-winding Triton's bright-hair'd daughters?
Or art, impossible! a nymph of Dian's,
Weaving a coronal of tender scions
For very idleness? Where'er thou art,
Methinks it now is at my will to start
Into thine arms; to scare Aurora's train,
And snatch thee from the morning; o'er the main
To scud like a wild bird, and take thee off

From thy sea-foamy cradle ; or to doff
 Thy shepherd vest, and woo thee 'mid fresh leaves.
 No, no, too eagerly my soul deceives
 Its powerless self: I know this cannot be.
 O let me then by some sweet dreaming flee
 To her entrancements : hither sleep awhile !
 Hither most gentle sleep ! and soothing foil
 For some few hours the coming solitude."

Thus spake he, and that moment felt endued
 With power to dream deliciously ; so wound
 Through a dim passage, searching till he found
 The smoothest mossy bed and deepest, where
 He threw himself, and just into the air
 Stretching his indolent arms, he took, O bliss !
 A naked waist : " Fair Cupid, whence is this ?"
 A well-known voice sigh'd, " Sweetest, here am I !"
 At which soft ravishment, with doting cry
 They trembled to each other. — Helicon !
 O fountain'd hill ! Old Homer's Helicon !
 That thou wouldst spout a little streamlet o'er
 These sorry pages ; then the verse would soar
 And sing above this gentle pair, like lark
 Over his nested young : but all is dark
 Around thine aged top, and thy clear fount
 Exhales in mists to heaven. Ay, the count
 Of mighty Poets is made up ; the scroll
 Is folded by the Muses ; the bright roll
 Is in Apollo's hand : our dazed eyes
 Have seen a new tinge in the western skies :
 The world has done its duty. Yet, oh yet,
 Although the sun of poesy is set,
 These lovers did embrace, and we must weep
 That there is no old power left to steep
 A quill immortal in their joyous tears.
 Long time in silence did their anxious fears
 Question that thus it was ; long time they lay
 Fondling and kissing every doubt away ;

Long time ere soft caressing sobs began
 To mellow into words, and then there ran
 Two bubbling springs of talk from their sweet lips.
 "O known Unknown! from whom my being sips
 Such darling essence, wherefore may I not
 Be ever in these arms? in this sweet spot
 Pillow my chin for ever? ever press
 These toying hands and kiss their smooth excess?
 Why not for ever and for ever feel
 That breath about my eyes? Ah, thou wilt steal
 Away from me again, indeed, indeed —
 Thou wilt be gone away, and wilt not heed
 My lonely madness. Speak, my kindest fair!
 Is — is it to be so? No! Who will dare
 To pluck thee from me? And, of thine own
 will,

Full well I feel thou wouldst not leave me. Still
 Let me entwine thee surer, surer — now
 How can we part? Elysium! Who art thou?
 Who, that thou canst not be for ever here,
 Or lift me with thee to some starry sphere?
 Enchantress! tell me by this soft embrace,
 By the most soft complexion of thy face,
 Those lips, O slippery blisses! twinkling eyes,
 And by these tenderest, milky sovereignties —
 These tenderest, and by the nectar-wine,
 The passion" — "O loved Ida the divine!
 Endymion! dearest! Ah, unhappy me!
 His soul will 'scape us — O felicity!
 How he does love me! His poor temples beat
 To the very tune of love — how sweet, sweet,
 sweet!

Revive, dear youth, or I shall faint and die;
 Revive, or these soft hours will hurry by
 In tranced dullness; speak, and let that spell
 Affright this lethargy! I cannot quell
 Its heavy pressure, and will press at least
 My lips to thine, that they may richly feast

Until we taste the life of love again.
 What! dost thou move? dost kiss? O bliss! O pain!
 I love thee, youth, more than I can conceive;
 And so long absence from thee doth bereave
 My soul of any rest: yet must I hence:
 Yet, can I not to starry eminence
 Uplift thee; nor for very shame can own
 Myself to thee. Ah, dearest! do not groan,
 Or thou wilt force me from this secrecy,
 And I must blush in heaven. O that I
 Had done it already! that the dreadful smiles
 At my lost brightness, my impassion'd wiles,
 Had waned from Olympus' solemn height,
 And from all serious Gods; that our delight
 Was quite forgotten, save of us alone!
 And wherefore so ashamed? 'Tis but to atone
 For endless pleasure, by some coward blushes:
 Yet must I be a coward! Horror rushes
 Too palpable before me — the sad look
 Of Jove — Minerva's start — no bosom shook
 With awe of purity — no Cupid pinion
 In reverence veil'd — my crystalline dominion
 Half lost, and all old hymns made nullity!
 But what is this to love? Oh! I could fly
 With thee into the ken of heavenly powers,
 So thou wouldst thus, for many sequent hours,
 Press me so sweetly. Now I swear at once
 That I am wise, that Pallas is a dunce —
 Perhaps her love like mine is but unknown —
 Oh! I do think that I have been alone
 In chastity! yes, Pallas has been sighing,
 While every eye saw me my hair uptying
 With fingers cool as aspen leaves. Sweet love!
 I was as vague as solitary dove,
 Nor knew that nests were built. Now a soft kiss —
 Ay, by that kiss, I vow an endless bliss,
 An immortality of passion's thine:
 Ere long I will exalt thee to the shine

Of heaven ambrosial; and we will shade
 Ourselves whole summers by a river glade;
 And I will tell thee stories of the sky,
 And breathe thee whispers of its minstrelsy.
 My happy love will overwing all bounds!
 O let me melt into thee! let the sounds
 Of our close voices marry at their birth;
 Let us entwine hoveringly! O dearth
 Of human words! roughness of mortal speech!
 Lispings empyrean will I sometimes teach
 Thine honey'd tongue — lute-breathings which I
 gasp

To have thee understand, now while I clasp
 Thee thus, and weep for fondness — I am pain'd,
 Endymion: woe! woe! is grief contain'd
 In the very deeps of pleasure, my sole life? —
 Hereat, with many sobs, her gentle strife
 Melted into a languor. He return'd
 Entranced vows and tears.

Ye who have yearn'd
 With too much passion, will here stay and pity,
 For the mere sake of truth; as 'tis a ditty
 Not of these days, but long ago 'twas told
 By a cavern wind unto a forest old;
 And then the forest told it in a dream
 To a sleeping lake, whose cool and level gleam
 A poet caught as he was journeying
 To Phœbus' shrine; and in it he did fling
 His weary limbs, bathing an hour's space,
 And after, straight in that inspired place
 He sang the story up into the air,
 Giving it universal freedom. There
 Has it been ever sounding for those ears
 Whose tips are glowing hot. The legend cheers
 Yon sentinel stars; and he who listens to it
 Must surely be self-doom'd or he will rue it:
 For quenchless burnings come upon the heart,

Made fiercer by a fear lest any part
 Should be engulfed in the eddying wind.
 As much as here is penn'd doth always find
 A resting-place, thus much comes clear and plain ;
 Anon the strange voice is upon the wane —
 And 'tis but echoed from departing sound,
 That the fair visitant at last unwound
 Her gentle limbs, and left the youth asleep. —
 Thus the tradition of the gusty deep.

Now turn we to our former chroniclers. —
 Endymion awoke, that grief of hers
 Sweet paining on his ear : he sickly guess'd
 How lone he was once more, and sadly press'd
 His empty arms together, hung his head,
 And most forlorn upon that widow'd bed
 Sat silently. Love's madness he had known :
 Often with more than tortured lion's groan
 Moanings had burst from him ; but now that rage
 Had pass'd away : no longer did he wage
 A rough-voiced war against the dooming stars.
 No, he had felt too much for such harsh jars :
 The lyre of his soul Æolian tuned
 Forgot all violence, and but communed
 With melancholy thought : O he had swoon'd
 Drunken from pleasure's nipple ! and his love
 Henceforth was dove-like. — Loth was he to move
 From the imprinted couch, and when he did,
 'Twas with slow, languid paces, and face hid
 In muffling hands. So temper'd, out he stray'd
 Half seeing visions that might have dismay'd
 Alecto's serpents ; ravishments more keen
 Than Hermes' pipe, when anxious he did lean
 Over eclipsing eyes : and at the last
 It was a sounding grotto, vaulted, vast,
 O'erstudded with a thousand, thousand pearls,
 And crimson-mouthed shells with stubborn curls,
 Of every shape and size, even to the bulk

In which whales harbour close, to brood and sulk
 Against an endless storm. Moreover too,
 Fish-semblances, of green and azure hue,
 Ready to snort their streams. In this cool wonder
 Endymion sat down, and 'gan to ponder
 On all his life : his youth, up to the day
 When 'mid acclaim, and feasts, and garlands gay,
 He stepp'd upon his shepherd throne : the look
 Of his white palace in wild forest nook,
 And all the revels he had lorded there :
 Each tender maiden whom he once thought fair,
 With every friend and fellow-woodlander —
 Pass'd like a dream before him. (Then the spur
 Of the old bards to mighty deeds : his plans
 To nurse the golden age 'mong shepherd clans :
 That wondrous night : the great Pan-festival :
 His sister's sorrow ; and his wanderings all,
 Until into the earth's deep maw he rush'd :
 Then all its buried magic, till it flush'd
 High with excessive love.) " And now," thought he,
 " How long must I remain in jeopardy
 Of blank amazements that amaze no more ?
 Now I have tasted her sweet soul to the core,
 All other depths are shallow : essences,
 Once spiritual, are like muddy lees,
 Meant but to fertilize my earthly root,
 And make my branches lift a golden fruit
 Into the bloom of heaven ; other light,
 Though it be quick and sharp enough to blight
 The Olympian eagle's vision, is dark,
 Dark as the parentage of chaos. Hark !
 My silent thoughts are echoing from these shells ;
 Or they are but the ghosts, the dying swells
 Of noises far away ? — list ! " — Hereupon
 He kept an anxious ear. The humming tone
 Came louder, and behold, there as he lay,
 On either side outgush'd, with misty spray,
 A copious spring ; and both together dash'd

Swift, mad, fantastic round the rocks, and lash'd
 Among the conchs and shells of the lofty grot,
 Leaving a trickling dew. At last they shot
 Down from the ceiling's height, pouring a noise
 As of some breathless racers whose hopes poise
 Upon the last few steps, and with spent force
 Along the ground they took a winding course.
 Endymion follow'd — for it seem'd that one
 Ever pursued, the other strove to shun —
 Follow'd their languid mazes, till well nigh
 He had left thinking of the mystery, —
 And was now rapt in tender hoverings
 Over the vanish'd bliss. Ah! what is it sings
 His dream away? What melodies are these?
 They sound as through the whispering of trees,
 Not native in such barren vaults. Give ear!

“ O Arethusa, peerless nymph! why fear
 Such tenderness as mine? Great Dian, why,
 Why didst thou hear her prayer? O that I
 Were rippling round her dainty fairness now,
 Circling about her waist, and striving how
 To entice her to a dive! then stealing in
 Between her luscious lips and eyelids thin.
 O that her shining hair was in the sun,
 And I distilling from it thence to run
 In amorous rillets down her shrinking form!
 To linger on her lily shoulders, warm
 Between her kissing breasts, and every charm
 Touch raptur'd! — see how painfully I flow:
 Fair maid, be pitiful to my great woe.
 Stay, stay thy weary course, and let me lead,
 A happy wooer, to the flowery mead
 Where all that beauty snared me.” — “ Cruel god,
 Desist! or my offended mistress' nod
 Will stagnate all thy fountains: — tease me not
 With syren words — Ah, have I really got
 Such power to madden thee? And is it true —

Away, away, or I shall dearly rue
 My very thoughts : in mercy then away,
 Kindest Alpheus, for should I obey
 My own dear will, 'twould be a deadly bane." —
 "O, Oread-Queen ! would that thou hadst a pain
 Like this of mine, then would I fearless turn
 And be a criminal." — "Alas, I burn,
 I shudder — gentle river, get thee hence.
 Alpheus ! thou enchanter ! every sense
 Of mine was once made perfect in these woods.
 Fresh breezes, bowery lawns, and innocent floods,
 Ripe fruits, and lonely couch, contentment gave ;
 But ever since I heedlessly did lave
 In thy deceitful stream, a panting glow
 Grew strong within me : wherefore serve me so,
 And call it love ? Alas ! 'twas cruelty.
 Not once more did I close my happy eyes
 Amid the thrush's song. Away ! avaunt !
 O 'twas a cruel thing." — "Now thou dost taunt
 So softly, Arethusa, that I think
 If thou wast playing on my shady brink,
 Thou wouldst bathe once again. Innocent maid !
 Stifle thine heart no more ; — nor be afraid
 Of angry powers : there are deities
 Will shade us with their wings. Those fitful sighs
 'Tis almost death to hear : O let me pour
 A dewy balm upon them ! — fear no more,
 Sweet Arethusa ! Dian's self must feel,
 Sometimes, these very pangs. Dear maiden, steal
 Blushing into my soul, and let us fly
 These dreary caverns for the open sky.
 I will delight thee all my winding course,
 From the green sea up to my hidden source
 About Arcadian forests ; and will show
 The channels where my coolest waters flow
 Through mossy rocks ; where 'mid exuberant green
 I roam in pleasant darkness, more unseen
 Than Saturn in his exile ; where I brim

Round flowery islands, and take thence a skim
 Of mealy sweets, which myriads of bees
 Buzz from their honey'd wings : and thou shouldst
 please

Thyself to choose the richest, where we might
 Be incense-pillow'd every summer night.
 Doff' all sad fears, thou white deliciousness,
 And let us be thus comforted ; unless
 Thou couldst rejoice to see my hopeless stream
 Hurry distracted from Sol's temperate beam,
 And pour to death along some hungry sands." —
 " What can I do, Alpheus ? Dian stands
 Severe before me : persecuting fate !
 Unhappy Arethusa ! thou wast late
 A huntress free in — " At this, sudden fell
 Those two sad streams adown a fearful dell.
 The Latmian listen'd, but he heard no more,
 Save echo, faint repeating o'er and o'er
 The name of Arethusa. On the verge
 Of that dark gulf he wept, and said : " I urge
 Thee, gentle Goddess of my pilgrimage,
 By our eternal hopes, to soothe, to assuage,
 If thou art powerful, these lovers' pains ;
 And make them happy in some happy plains."

He turn'd — there was a whelming sound — he
 stept,
 There was a cooler light ; and so he kept
 Towards it by a sandy path, and lo !
 More suddenly than doth a moment go,
 The visions of the earth were gone and fled —
 He saw the giant sea above his head.

BOOK III.

THERE are who lord it o'er their fellow-men
 With most prevailing tinsel : who unpen
 Their baaing vanities, to browse away
 The comfortable green and juicy hay
 From human pastures ; or, O torturing fact !
 Who, through an idiot blink, will see un-pack'd
 Fire-branded foxes to sear up and singe
 Our gold and ripe-ear'd hopes. With not one
 tinge

Of sanctuary splendour, not a sight
 Able to face an owl's, they still are dight
 By the blear-eyed nations in empurpled vests,
 And crowns, and turbans. With unladen breasts,
 Save of blown self-applause, they proudly mount
 To their spirit's perch, their being's high account,
 Their tiptop nothings, their dull skies, their
 thrones —

Amid the fierce intoxicating tones
 Of trumpets, shoutings, and belabour'd drums,
 And sudden cannon. Ah ! how all this hums,
 In wakeful ears, like uproar past and gone —
 Like thunder-clouds that spake to Babylon,
 And set those old Chaldeans to their tasks. —
 Are then regalities all gilded masks ?
 No, there are throned seats unscalable
 But by a patient wing, a constant spell,
 Or by ethereal things that, unconfined,
 Can make a ladder of the eternal wind,
 And poise about in cloudy thunder-tents
 To watch the abysm-birth of elements.
 Ay, 'bove the withering of old-lipp'd Fate
 A thousand Powers keep religious state,
 In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne ;
 And, silent as a consecrated urn,
 Hold sphery sessions for a season due.

Yet few of these far majesties, ah, few !
Have bared their operations to this globe —
Few, who with gorgeous pageantry enrobe
Our piece of heaven — whose benevolence
Shakes hand with our own Ceres ; every sense
Filling with spiritual sweets to plenitude,
As bees gorge full their cells. And by the feud
'Twixt Nothing and Creation, I here swear,
Eterne Apollo ! that thy Sister fair
Is of all these the gentlier-mightiest.
When thy gold breath is misting in the west,
She unobserved steals unto her throne,
And there she sits most meek and most alone ;
As if she had not pomp subservient ;
As if thine eye, high Poet ! was not bent
Towards her with the Muses in thine heart ;
As if the minist'ring stars kept not apart,
Waiting for silver-footed messages.
O Moon ! the oldest shades 'mong oldest trees
Feel palpitations when thou lookest in :
O Moon ! old boughs lisp forth a holier din
The while they feel thine airy fellowship.
Thou dost bless everywhere, with silver lip
Kissing dead things to life. The sleeping kine,
Couch'd in thy brightness, dream of fields divine :
Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,
Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes ;
And yet thy benediction passeth not
One obscure hiding-place, one little spot
Where pleasure may be sent : the nested wren
Has thy fair face within its tranquil ken,
And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf
Takes glimpses of thee ; thou art a relief
To the poor patient oyster, where it sleeps
Within its pearly house ; — The mighty deeps,
The monstrous sea is thine — the myriad sea !
O Moon ! far spooming Ocean bows to thee,
And Tellus feels her forehead's cumbrous load.

Cynthia ! where art thou now ? What far abode
 Of green or silvery bower doth enshrine
 Such utmost beauty ? Alas, thou dost pine
 For one as sorrowful : thy cheek is pale
 For one whose cheek is pale : thou dost bewail
 His tears who weeps for thee ! Where dost thou
 sigh ?

Ah ! surely that light peeps from Vesper's eye,
 Or, what a thing is love ! 'Tis She, but lo !
 How changed, how full of ache, how gone in woe !
 She dies at the thinnest cloud ; her loveliness
 Is wan on Neptune's blue : yet there's a stress
 Of love-spangles, just off yon cape of trees,
 Dancing upon the waves, as if to please
 The curly foam with amorous influence.

O, not so idle ! for down glancing thence,
 She fathoms eddies, and runs wild about
 O'erwhelming water-courses ; scaring out
 The thorny sharks from hiding-holes, and fright'-
 ning

Their savage eyes with unaccustom'd lightning.
 Where will the splendour be content to reach ?
 O love ! how potent hast thou been to teach
 Strange journeyings ! Wherever beauty dwells,
 In gulf or aerie, mountains or deep dells,
 In light, in gloom, in star or blazing sun,
 Thou pointest out the way, and straight 'tis won.
 Amid his toil thou gavest Leander breath ;
 Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams of
 death ;

Thou madest Pluto bear thin element :
 And now, O winged Chieftain ! thou hast sent
 A moonbeam to the deep, deep water-world,
 To find Endymion.

On gold sand impearl'd
 With lily shells, and pebbles milky white,
 Poor Cynthia greeted him, and soothed her light

Against his pallid face : he felt the charm
 To breathlessness, and suddenly a warm
 Of his heart's blood : 'twas very sweet ; he stay'd
 His wandering steps, and half-entranced laid
 His head upon a tuft of straggling weeds,
 To taste the gentle moon, and freshening beads,
 Lash'd from the crystal roof by fishes' tails.
 And so he kept, until the rosy veils
 Mantling the east, by Aurora's peering hand
 Were lifted from the water's breast, and fann'd
 Into sweet air ; and sober'd morning came
 Meekly through billows : — when like taper-flame
 Left sudden by a dallying breath of air,
 He rose in silence, and once more 'gan fare
 Along his fated way.

Far had he roam'd,
 With nothing save the hollow vast, that foam'd
 Above, around, and at his feet ; save things
 More dead than Morpheus' imaginings :
 Old rusted anchors, helmets, breastplates large
 Of gone sea-warriors ; brazen beaks and targe ;
 Rudders that for a hundred years had lost
 The sway of human hand ; gold vase emboss'd
 With long-forgotten story, and wherein
 No reveller had ever dipp'd a chin
 But those of Saturn's vintage ; mouldering scrolls,
 Writ in the tongue of heaven, by those souls
 Who first were on the earth ; and sculptures rude
 In ponderous stone, developing the mood
 Of ancient Nox ; — then skeletons of man,
 Of beast, behemoth, and leviathan,
 And elephant, and eagle, and huge jaw
 Of nameless monster. A cold leaden awe
 These secrets struck into him ; and unless
 Dian had chased away that heaviness,
 He might have died : but now, with cheered feel,

He onward kept ; wooing these thoughts to steal
About the labyrinth in his soul of love.

“ What is there in thee, Moon ! that thou shouldst
move

My heart so potently ? When yet a child
I oft have dried my tears when thou hast smiled.
Thou seem'dst my sister : hand in hand we went
From eve to morn across the firmament.
No apples would I gather from the tree,
Till thou hadst cool'd their cheeks deliciously :
No tumbling water ever spake romance,
But when my eyes with thine thereon could dance :
No woods were green enough, no bower divine,
Until thou liftedst up thine eyelids fine :
In sowing-time ne'er would I dibble take,
Or drop a seed, till thou wast wide awake ;
And, in the summer-tide of blossoming,
No one but thee hath heard me blithely sing
And mesh my dewy flowers all the night.
No melody was like a passing spright
If it went not to solemnize thy reign.
Yes, in my boyhood, every joy and pain
By thee were fashion'd to the self-same end ;
And as I grew in years, still didst thou blend
With all my ardours ; thou wast the deep glen ;
Thou wast the mountain-top — the sage's pen —
The poet's harp — the voice of friends — the sun ;
Thou wast the river — thou wast glory won ;
Thou wast my clarion's blast — thou wast my
steed —
My goblet full of wine — my topmost deed : —
Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon !
O what a wild and harmonized tune
My spirit struck from all the beautiful !
On some bright essence could I lean, and lull
Myself to immortality : I prest
Nature's soft pillow in a wakeful rest.

But gentle Orb! there came a nearer bliss —
 My strange love came — Felicity's abyss!
 She came, and thou didst fade, and fade away —
 Yet not entirely; no, thy starry sway
 Has been an under-passion to this hour.
 Now I begin to feel thine orby power
 Is coming fresh upon me: O be kind!
 Keep back thine influence, and do not blind
 My sovereign vision. — Dearest love, forgive
 That I can think away from thee and live! —
 Pardon me, airy planet, that I prize
 One thought beyond thine argent luxuries!
 How far beyond!" At this a surprised start
 Frosted the springing verdure of his heart;
 For as he lifted up his eyes to swear
 How his own goddess was past all things fair,
 He saw far in the concave green of the sea
 An old man sitting calm and peacefully.
 Upon a weeded rock this old man sat,
 And his white hair was awful, and a mat
 Of weeds were cold beneath his cold thin feet;
 And, ample as the largest winding-sheet,
 A cloak of blue wrapp'd up his aged bones,
 O'erwrought with symbols by the deepest groans
 Of ambitious magic: every ocean-form
 Was woven in with black distinctness; storm,
 And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar
 Were emblem'd in the woof; with every shape
 That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape and
 cape.

The gulphing whale was like a dot in the spell,
 Yet look upon it, and 'twould size and swell
 To its huge self; and the minutest fish
 Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,
 And show his little eye's anatomy.
 Then there was pictured the regality
 Of Neptune; and the sea-nymphs round his state,
 In beauteous vassalage, look up and wait.

Beside this old man lay a pearly wand,
 And in his lap a book, the which he conn'd
 So steadfastly, that the new denizen
 Had time to keep him in amazed ken,
 To mark these shadowings, and stand in awe.

The old man raised his hoary head and saw
 The wilder'd stranger — seeming not to see,
 His features were so lifeless. Suddenly
 He woke as from a trance; his snow-white brows
 Went arching up, and like two magic ploughs
 Furrow'd deep wrinkles in his forehead large,
 Which kept as fixedly as rocky marge,
 Till round his wither'd lips had gone a smile.
 Then up he rose, like one whose tedious toil
 Had watch'd for years in forlorn hermitage,
 Who had not from mid-life to utmost age
 Eased in one accent his o'erburden'd soul,
 Even to the trees. He rose: he grasp'd his stole,
 With convulsed clenches waving it abroad,
 And in a voice of solemn joy, that awed
 Echo into oblivion, he said: —

“Thou art the man! Now shall I lay my head
 In peace upon my watery pillow: now
 Sleep will come smoothly to my weary brow.
 O Jove! I shall be young again, be young!
 O shell-borne Neptune, I am pierced and stung
 With new-born life! What shall I do? Where go,
 When I have cast this serpent-skin of woe? —
 I'll swim to the syrens, and one moment listen
 Their melodies, and see their long hair glisten;
 Anon upon that giant's arm I'll be,
 That writhes about the roots of Sicily:
 To northern seas I'll in a twinkling sail,
 And mount upon the snortings of a whale
 To some black cloud; thence down I'll madly sweep
 On forked lightning, to the deepest deep,

Where through some sucking pool I will be hurl'd
 With rapture to the other side of the world !
 O, I am full of gladness ! Sisters three,
 I bow full-hearted to your old decree !
 Yes, every god be thank'd, and power benign,
 For I no more shall wither, droop, and pine.
 Thou art the man ! " Endymion started back
 Dismay'd ; and like a wretch from whom the rack
 Tortures hot breath, and speech of agony,
 Mutter'd : " What lonely death am I to die
 In this cold region ? Will he let me freeze,
 And float my brittle limbs o'er polar seas ?
 Or will he touch me with his searing hand,
 And leave a black memorial on the sand ?
 Or tear me piecemeal with a bony saw,
 And keep me as a chosen food to draw
 His magian fish through hated fire and flame ?
 O misery of hell ! resistless, tame,
 Am I to be burn'd up ? No, I will shout,
 Until the gods through heaven's blue look out ! —
 O Tartarus ! but some few days ago
 Her soft arms were entwining me, and on
 Her voice I hung like fruit among green leaves :
 Her lips were all my own, and — ah, ripe sheaves
 Of happiness ! ye on the stubble droop,
 But never may be garner'd. I must stoop
 My head, and kiss death's foot. Love ! love, fare-
 well !
 Is there no hope from thee ? This horrid spell
 Would melt at thy sweet breath. — By Dian's hind
 Feeding from her white fingers, on the wind
 I see thy streaming hair ! and now, by Pan,
 I care not for this old mysterious man ! "

He spake, and walking to that aged form,
 Look'd high defiance. Lo ! his heart 'gan warm
 With pity, for the gray-haired creature wept.
 Had he then wrong'd a heart where sorrow kept ?

Had he, though blindly contumelious, brought
 Rheum to kind eyes, a sting to human thought,
 Convulsion to a mouth of many years?
 He had in truth; and he was ripe for tears.
 The penitent shower fell, as down he knelt
 Before that care-worn sage, who trembling felt
 About his large dark locks, and faltering spake :

“ Arise, good youth, for sacred Phœbus’ sake !
 I know thine inmost bosom, and I feel
 A very brother’s yearning for thee steal
 Into mine own : for why ? thou openest
 The prison-gates that have so long oppress’d
 My weary watching. Though thou know’st it not,
 Thou art commission’d to this fated spot
 For great enfranchisement. O weep no more !
 I am a friend to love, to loves of yore :
 Ay, hadst thou never loved an unknown power,
 I had been grieving at this joyous hour.
 But even now, most miserable old,
 I saw thee, and my blood no longer cold
 Gave mighty pulses : in this tottering case
 Grew a new heart, which at this moment plays
 As dancingly as thine. Be not afraid,
 For thou shalt hear this secret all display’d,
 Now as we speed towards our joyous task.”

So saying, this young soul in age’s mask
 Went forward with the Carian side by side :
 Resuming quickly thus ; while ocean’s tide
 Hung swollen at their backs, and jewell’d sands
 Took silently their foot-prints.

“ My soul stands
 Now past the midway from mortality,
 And so I can prepare without a sigh
 To tell thee briefly all my joy and pain.
 I was a fisher once, upon this main,

And my boat danced in every creek and bay ;
 Rough billows were my home by night and day, —
 The sea-gulls not more constant ; for I had
 No housing from the storm and tempests mad,
 But hollow rocks, — and they were palaces
 Of silent happiness, of slumberous ease :
 Long years of misery have told me so.
 Ay, thus it was one thousand years ago.
 One thousand years ! — Is it then possible
 To look so plainly through them ? to dispel
 A thousand years with backward glance sublime ?
 To breathe away as 'twere all scummy slime
 From off a crystal pool, to see its deep,
 And one's own image from the bottom peep ?
 Yes : now I am no longer wretched thrall,
 My long captivity and moanings all
 Are but a slime, a thin-pervading scum,
 The which I breathe away, and thronging come
 Like things of yesterday my youthful pleasures.

“ I touch'd no lute, I sang not, trod no measures :
 I was a lonely youth on desert shores.
 My sports were lonely, 'mid continuous roars,
 And craggy isles, and seamews' plaintive cry
 Plaining discrepant between sea and sky.
 Dolphins were still my playmates ; shapes unseen
 Would let me feel their scales of gold and green,
 Nor be my desolation ; and, full oft,
 When a dread waterspout had rear'd aloft
 Its hungry hugeness, seeming ready ripe
 To burst with hoarsest thunderings, and wipe
 My life away like a vast sponge of fate,
 Some friendly monster, pitying my sad state,
 Has dived to its foundations, gulf'd it down,
 And left me tossing safely. But the crown
 Of all my life was utmost quietude :
 More did I love to lie in cavern rude,
 Keeping in wait whole days for Neptune's voice,

And if it came at last, hark, and rejoice !
 There blush'd no summer eve but I would steer
 My skiff along green shelving coasts, to hear
 The shepherd's pipe come clear from aery steep,
 Mingled with ceaseless bleatings of his sheep :
 And never was a day of summer shine,
 But I beheld its birth upon the brine :
 For I would watch all night to see unfold
 Heaven's gates, and Æthon snort his morning gold
 Wide o'er the swelling streams : and constantly
 At brim of day-tide, on some grassy lea,
 My nets would be spread out, and I at rest.
 The poor folk of the sea-country I blest
 With daily boon of fish most delicate :
 They knew not whence this bounty, and elate
 Would strew sweet flowers on a sterile beach.

“ Why was I not contented ? Wherefore reach
 At things which, but for thee, O Latmian !
 Had been my dreary death ! Fool ! I began
 To feel distemper'd longings : to desire
 The utmost privilege that ocean's sire
 Could grant in benediction : to be free
 Of all his kingdom. Long in misery
 I wasted, ere in one extremest fit
 I plunged for life or death. To interknit
 One's senses with so dense a breathing stuff
 Might seem a work of pain ; so not enough
 Can I admire how crystal-smooth it felt,
 And buoyant round my limbs. At first I dwelt
 Whole days and days in sheer astonishment ;
 Forgetful utterly of self-intent ;
 Moving but with the mighty ebb and flow.
 Then, like a new-fledged bird that first doth show
 His spreaded feathers to the morrow chill,
 I tried in fear the pinions of my will.
 'Twas freedom ! and at once I visited
 The ceaseless wonders of this ocean-bed.

No need to tell thee of them, for I see
 That thou hast been a witness — it must be
 For these I know thou canst not feel a drouth,
 By the melancholy corners of that mouth.
 So I will in my story straightway pass
 To more immediate matter. Woe, alas !
 That love should be my bane ! Ab, Scylla fair !
 Why did poor Glaucus ever — ever dare
 To sue thee to his heart ? Kind stranger-youth !
 I loved her to the very white of truth,
 And she would not conceive it. Timid thing !
 She fled me swift as sea-bird on the wing,
 Round every isle, and point, and promontory,
 From where large Hercules wound up his story
 Far as Egyptian Nile. My passion grew
 The more, the more I saw her dainty hue
 Gleam delicately through the azure clear :
 Until 'twas too fierce agony to bear ;
 And in that agony, across my grief
 It flash'd, that Circe might find some relief —
 Cruel enchantress ! So above the water
 I rear'd my head, and look'd for Phœbus' daughter.
 Ææa's isle was wondering at the moon : —
 It seem'd to whirl around me, and a swoon
 Left me dead-drifting to that fatal power.

“ When I awoke, 'twas in a twilight bower ;
 Just when the light of morn, with hum of bees,
 Stole through its verdurous matting of fresh trees.
 How sweet, and sweeter ! for I heard a lyre,
 And over it a sighing voice expire.
 It ceased — I caught light footsteps ; and anon
 The fairest face that morn e'er look'd upon
 Push'd through a screen of roses. Starry Jove !
 With tears, and smiles, and honey-words she wove
 A net whose thralldom was more bliss than all
 The range of flower'd Elysium. Thus did fall
 The dew of her rich speech : ‘ Ah ! art awake ?

O let me hear thee speak, for Cupid's sake !
 I am so oppress'd with joy ! Why, I have shed
 An urn of tears, as though thou wert cold dead ;
 And now I find thee living, I will pour
 From these devoted eyes their silver store,
 Until exhausted, of the latest drop,
 So it will pleasure thee, and force thee stop
 Here, that I too may live : but if beyond
 Such cool and sorrowful offerings, thou art fond
 Of soothing warmth, of dalliance supreme ;
 If thou art ripe to taste a long love-dream ;
 If smiles, if dimples, tongues for ardour mute,
 Hang in thy vision like a tempting fruit,
 O let me pluck it for thee ! ' Thus she link'd
 Her charming syllables, till indistinct
 Their music came to my o'er-sweeten'd soul ;
 And then she hover'd over me, and stole
 So near, that if no nearer it had been
 This furrow'd visage thou hadst never seen.

“ Young man of Latmos ! thus particular
 Am I, that thou may'st plainly see how far
 This fierce temptation went : and thou may'st not
 Exclaim, How, then, was Scylla quite forgot ?

“ Who could resist ? Who in this universe ?
 She did so breathe ambrosia ; so immerse
 My fine existence in a golden clime.
 She took me like a child of suckling time,
 And cradled me in roses. Thus condemn'd,
 The current of my former life was stemm'd,
 And to this arbitrary queen of sense
 I bow'd a tranced vassal : nor would thence
 Have moved, even though Amphion's harp had
 woo'd
 Me back to Scylla o'er the billows rude.
 For as Apollo each eve doth devise
 A new apparelling for western skies :

So every eve, nay, every spendthrift hour
 Shed balmy consciousness within that bower.
 And I was free of haunts umbrageous ;
 Could wander in the mazy forest-house
 Of squirrels, foxes shy, and antler'd deer,
 And birds from coverts innermost and drear
 Warbling for very joy mellifluous sorrow —
 To me new-born delights !

“ Now let me borrow,
 For moments few, a temperament as stern
 As Pluto's sceptre, that my words not burn
 These uttering lips, while I in calm speech tell
 How specious heaven was changed to real hell.

“ One morn she left me sleeping : half awake
 I sought for her smooth arms and lips, to slake
 My greedy thirst with nectarous camel-draughts ;
 But she was gone. Whereat the barbed shafts
 Of disappointment stuck in me so sore,
 That out I ran and search'd the forest o'er.
 Wandering about in pine and cedar gloom
 Damp awe assail'd me, for there 'gan to boom
 A sound of moan, an agony of sound,
 Sepulchral from the distance all around.
 Then came a conquering earth-thunder, and rum-
 bled
 That fierce complain to silence : while I stumbled
 Down a precipitous path, as if impell'd.
 I came to a dark valley. — Groanings swell'd
 Poisonous about my ears, and louder grew,
 The nearer I approach'd a flame's gaunt blue,
 That glared before me through a thorny brake.
 This fire, like the eye of gordian snake,
 Bewitch'd me towards ; and I soon was near
 A sight too fearful for the feel of fear :
 In thicket hid I cursed the haggard scene —
 The banquet of my arms, my arbour queen,

Seated upon an uptorn forest root ;
And all around her shapes, wizzard and brute,
Laughing, and wailing, grovelling, serpentine,
Showing tooth, tusk, and venom-bag, and sting.
O such deformities ! old Charon's self,
Should he give up awhile his penny pelf,
And take a dream 'mong rushes Stygian,
It could not be so fantasied. Fierce, wan,
And tyrannizing was the lady's look,
As over them a gnarled staff she shook.
Ofttimes upon the sudden she laugh'd out,
And from a basket emptied to the rout
Clusters of grapes, the which they raven'd quick
And roar'd for more ; with many a hungry lick
About their shaggy jaws. Avenging, slow,
Anon she took a branch of mistletoe,
And emptied on't a black dull-gurgling phial :
Groan'd one and all, as if some piercing trial
Was sharpening for their pitiable bones.
She lifted up the charm : appealing groans
From their poor breasts went suing to her ear
In vain ; remorseless as an infant's bier
She whisk'd against their eyes the sooty oil.
Whereat was heard a noise of painful toil,
Increasing gradual to a tempest rage,
Shrieks, yells, and groans of torture-pilgrimage ;
Until their griev'd bodies 'gan to bloat
And puff from the tail's end to stifled throat :
Then was appalling silence : then a sight
More wildering than all that hoarse affright ;
For the whole herd, as by a whirlwind writen,
Went through the dismal air like one huge Python
Antagonizing Boreas, — and so vanish'd,
Yet there was not a breath of wind : she banish'd
These phantoms with a nod. Lo ! from the dark
Came waggish fauns, and nymphs, and satyrs stark,
With dancing and loud revelry, — and went
Swifter than centaurs after rapine bent. —

Sighing an elephant appear'd and bow'd
 Before the fierce witch, speaking thus aloud
 In human accent : ' Potent goddess ! chief
 Of pains resistless ! make my being brief,
 Or let me from this heavy prison fly :
 Or give me to the air, or let me die !
 I sue not for my happy crown again ;
 I sue not for my phalanx on the plain ;
 I sue not for my lone, my widow'd wife :
 I sue not for my ruddy drops of life,
 My children fair, my lovely girls and boys !
 I will forget them ; I will pass these joys ;
 Ask nought so heavenward, so too — too high :
 Only I pray, as fairest boon, to die,
 Or be deliver'd from this cumbrous flesh,
 From this gross, detestable, filthy mesh,
 And merely given to the cold bleak air.
 Have mercy, Goddess ! Circe, feel my prayer !'

“ That curst magician's name fell icy numb
 Upon my wild conjecturing : truth had come
 Naked and sabre-like against my heart.
 I saw a fury whetting a death-dart ;
 And my slain spirit, overwrought with fright,
 Fainted away in that dark lair of night.
 Think, my deliverer, how desolate
 My waking must have been ! disgust and hate,
 And terrors manifold divided me
 A spoil amongst them. I prepared to flee
 Into the dungeon core of that wild wood :
 I fled three days — when lo ! before me stood
 Glaring the angry witch. O Dis, even now,
 A clammy dew is beading on my brow,
 At mere remembering her pale laugh, and curse.
 ' Ha ! ha ! Sir Dainty ! there must be a nurse
 Made of rose-leaves and thistle-down, express,
 To cradle thee, my sweet, and lull thee : yes,
 I am too flinty-hard for thy nice touch :

My tenderest squeeze is but a giant's clutch.
 So, fairy-thing, it shall have lullabies
 Unheard of yet; and it shall still its cries
 Upon some breast more lily-feminine.
 Oh, no — it shall not pine, and pine, and pine
 More than one pretty, trifling thousand years;
 And then 'twere pity, but fate's gentle shears
 Cut short its immortality. Sea-flirt!
 Young dove of the waters! truly I'll not hurt
 One hair of thine: see how I weep and sigh,
 That our heart-broken parting is so nigh.
 And must we part? Ah, yes, it must be so.
 Yet ere thou leavest me in utter woe,
 Let me sob over thee my last adieus,
 And speak a blessing: Mark me! thou hast thews
 Immortal, for thou art of heavenly race:
 But such a love is mine, that here I chase
 Eternally away from thee all bloom
 Of youth, and destine thee towards a tomb.
 Hence shalt thou quickly to the watery vast;
 And there, ere many days be overpast,
 Disabled age shall seize thee; and even then
 Thou shalt not go the way of aged men;
 But live and wither, cripple and still breathe
 Ten hundred years: which gone, I then bequeathe
 Thy fragile bones to unknown burial.
 Adieu, sweet love, adieu! — As shot stars fall,
 She fled ere I could groan for mercy. Stung
 And poison'd was my spirit: despair sung
 A war-song of defiance 'gainst all hell.
 A hand was at my shoulder to compel
 My sullen steps; another 'fore my eyes
 Moved on with pointed finger. In this guise
 Enforced, at the last by ocean's foam
 I found me; by my fresh, my native home,
 Its tempering coolness, to my life akin,
 Came salutary as I waded in;
 And, with a blind voluptuous rage, I gave

Battle to the swollen billow-ridge, and drave
 Large froth before me, while there yet remain'd
 Hale strength, nor from my bones all marrow
 drain'd.

“ Young lover, I must weep — such hellish spite
 With dry cheek who can tell? While thus my
 might

Proving upon this element, dismay'd,
 Upon a dead thing's face my hand I laid ;
 I look'd — 'twas Scylla ! Cursed, cursed Circe !
 O vulture-witch, hast never heard of mercy !
 Could not thy harshest vengeance be content,
 But thou must nip this tender innocent
 Because I loved her ? — Cold, O cold indeed
 Were her fair limbs, and like a common weed
 The sea-swell took her hair. Dead as she was
 I clung about her waist, nor ceased to pass
 Fleet as an arrow through unfathom'd brine,
 Until there shone a fabric crystalline,
 Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and pearl.
 Headlong I darted ; at one eager swirl
 Gain'd its bright portal, enter'd, and behold !
 'Twas vast, and desolate, and icy-cold ;
 And all around — But wherefore this to thee
 Who in few minutes more thyself shalt see ? —
 I left poor Scylla in a niche and fled.
 My fever'd parchings up, my scathing dread
 Met palsy half way : soon these limbs became
 Gaunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd, and lame.

“ Now let me pass a cruel, cruel space,
 Without one hope, without one faintest trace
 Of mitigation, or redeeming bubble
 Of colour'd phantasy : for I fear 'twould trouble
 Thy brain to loss of reason : and next tell
 How a restoring chance came down to quell
 One half of the witch in me.

" On a day,
 Sitting upon a rock above the spray,
 I saw grow up from the horizon's brink
 A gallant vessel : soon she seem'd to sink
 Away from me again, as though her course
 Had been resumed in spite of hindering force —
 So vanish'd : and not long, before arose
 Dark clouds, and muttering of winds morose,
 Old Æolus would stifle his mad spleen,
 But could not ; therefore, all the billows green
 Toss'd up the silver spume against the clouds.
 The tempest came : I saw that vessel's shrouds
 In perilous bustle ; while upon the deck
 Stood trembling creatures. I beheld the wreck ;
 The final gulping ; the poor struggling souls ;
 I heard their cries amid loud thunder-rolls.
 O they had all been saved but crazed eld
 Annull'd my vigorous cravings ; and thus quell'd
 And curb'd, think on't, O Latmian ! did I sit
 Writhing with pity, and a cursing fit
 Against that hell-born Circe. The crew had gone,
 By one and one, to pale oblivion ;
 And I was gazing on the surges prone,
 With many a scalding tear, and many a groan,
 When at my feet emerged an old man's hand,
 Grasping this scroll, and this same slender wand.
 I knelt with pain — reach'd out my hand — had
 grasp'd
 These treasures — touch'd the knuckles — they un-
 clasp'd —
 I caught a finger : but the downward weight
 O'erpower'd me — it sank. Then 'gan abate
 The storm, and through chill aguish gloom outburst
 The comfortable sun. I was athirst
 To search the book, and in the warming air
 Parted its dripping leaves with eager care.
 Strange matters did it treat of, and drew on
 My soul page after page, till well nigh won

Into forgetfulness; when, stupefied,
 I read these words, and read again, and tried
 My eyes against the heavens, and read again.
 O what a load of misery and pain
 Each Atlas-line bore off! — a shine of hope
 Came gold around me, cheering me to cope
 Strenuous with hellish tyranny. Attend!
 For thou hast brought their promise to an end.

“ In the wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch,
 Doom'd with enfeebled carcase to outstretch
 His loathed existence through ten centuries,
 And then to die alone. Who can devise
 A total opposition? No one. So
 One million times ocean must ebb and flow,
 And he oppressed. Yet he shall not die,
 These things accomplish'd: — If he utterly
 Scans all the depths of magic, and expounds
 The meanings of all motions, shapes, and sounds;
 If he explores all forms and substances
 Straight homeward to their symbol-essences;
 He shall not die. Moreover, and in chief,
 He must pursue this task of joy and grief
 Most piously; — all lovers tempest-tost,
 And in the savage overwhelming lost,
 He shall deposit side by side, until
 Time's creeping shall the dreary space fulfil:
 Which done, and all these labours ripened,
 A youth, by heavenly power loved and led,
 Shall stand before him; whom he shall direct
 How to consummate all. The youth elect
 Must do the thing, or both will be destroy'd.”

“ Then,” cried the young Endymion, overjoy'd,
 “ We are twin brothers in this destiny!
 Say, I entreat thee, what achievement high
 Is, in this restless world, for me reserved.
 What! if from thee my wandering feet had
 swerved,

Had we both perish'd?" — "Look!" the sage replied,

"Dost thou not mark a gleaming through the tide,
Of divers brilliances? 'tis the edifice
I told thee of, where lovely Scylla lies;
And where I have enshrined piously
All lovers, whom fell storms have doom'd to die
Throughout my bondage." Thus discoursing, on
They went till unobscured the porches shone;
Which hurryingly they gain'd, and enter'd straight.
Sure never since king Neptune held his state
Was seen such wonder underneath the stars.
Turn to some level plain where haughty Mars
Has legion'd all his battle; and behold
How every soldier, with firm foot, doth hold
His even breast; see, many steeled squares,
And rigid ranks of iron — whence who dares
One step? Imagine further, line by line,
These warrior thousands on the field supine: —
So in that crystal place, in silent rows,
Poor lovers lay at rest from joys and woes.
The stranger from the mountains, breathless, traced
Such thousands of shut eyes in order placed;
Such ranges of white feet, and patient lips
All ruddy, — for here death no blossom nips.
He mark'd their brows and foreheads; saw their
hair
Put sleekly on one side with nicest care;
And each one's gentle wrists, with reverence,
Put cross-wise to its heart.

"Let us commence
(Whisper'd the guide, stuttering with joy) even
now."

He spake, and, trembling like an aspen-bough,
Began to tear his scroll in pieces small,
Uttering the while some mumblings funeral.
He tore it into pieces small as snow

That drifts unfeather'd when bleak northerns
 blow ;
 And having done it, took his dark blue cloak
 And bound it round Endymion : then struck
 His wand against the empty air times nine.
 " What more there is to do, young man, is thine :
 But first a little patience ; first undo
 This tangled thread, and wind it to a clue.
 Ah, gentle ! 'tis as weak as spider's skein ;
 And shouldst thou break it — What, is it done so
 clean ?
 A power overshadows thee ! Oh, brave !
 The spite of hell is tumbling to its grave.
 Here is a shell ; 'tis pearly blank to me,
 Nor mark'd with any sign or charactery —
 Canst thou read aught ? O read for pity's sake !
 Olympus ! we are safe ! Now, Carian, break
 This wand against yon lyre on the pedestal."

'Twas done : and straight with sudden swell and
 fall

Sweet music breathed her soul away, and sigh'd
 A lullaby to silence. — " Youth ! now strew
 These minced leaves on me, and passing through
 Those files of dead, scatter the same around,
 And thou wilt see the issue." — 'Mid the sound
 Of flutes and viols, ravishing his heart,
 Endymion from Glaucus stood apart,
 And scatter'd in his face some fragments light.
 How lightning-swift the change ! a youthful wight
 Smiling beneath a coral diadem,
 Out-sparkling sudden like an upturn'd gem,
 Appear'd, and, stepping to a beauteous corse,
 Kneel'd down beside it, and with tenderest force
 Press'd its cold hand, and wept — and Scylla
 sigh'd !
 Endymion, with quick hand, the charm applied —
 The nymph arose : he left them to their joy,

And onward went upon his high employ,
 Showering those powerful fragments on the dead,
 And, as he pass'd, each lifted up its head,
 As doth a flower at Apollo's touch.
 Death felt it to his inwards; 'twas too much :
 Death fell a-weeping in his charnel-house.
 The Latnian persevered along, and thus
 All were reanimated. There arose
 A noise of harmony, pulses and throes
 Of gladness in the air — while many, who
 Had died in mutual arms devout and true,
 Sprang to each other madly ; and the rest
 Felt a high certainty of being blest.
 They gazed upon Endymion. Enchantment
 Grew drunken, and would have its head and bent.
 Delicious symphonies, like airy flowers,
 Budded, and swell'd, and, full-blown, shed full
 showers
 Of light, soft, unseen leaves of sounds divine.
 The two deliverers tasted a pure wine
 Of happiness, from fairy press oozed out.
 Speechless they eyed each other, and about
 The fair assembly wander'd to and fro,
 Distracted with the richest overflow
 Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven.

— “ Away ! ”

Shouted the new-born god ; “ Follow, and pay
 Our piety to Neptunus supreme ! ” —
 Then Scylla, blushing sweetly from her dream,
 They led on first, bent to her meek surprise,
 Through portal columns of a giant size
 Into the vaulted, boundless emerald.
 Joyous all follow'd, as the leader call'd,
 Down marble steps ; pouring as easily
 As hour-glass sand — and fast, as you might see
 Swallows obeying the south summer's call,
 Or swans upon a gentle waterfall.

Thus went that beautiful multitude, nor far,
 Ere from among some rocks of glittering spar,
 Just within ken, they saw descending thick
 Another multitude. Whereat more quick
 Moved either host. On a wide sand they met,
 And of those numbers every eye was wet ;
 For each their old love found. A murmuring rose
 Like what was never heard in all the throes
 Of wind and waters : 'tis past human wit
 To tell ; 'tis dizziness to think of it.

This mighty consummation made, the host
 Moved on for many a league ; and gain'd and lost
 Huge sea-marks ; vanward swelling in array,
 And from the rear diminishing away,
 Till a faint dawn surprised them. Glaucus cried,
 " Behold ! behold, the palace of his pride !
 God Neptune's palaces." With noise increased,
 They shoulder'd on towards that brightening east.
 At every onward step proud domes arose
 In prospect, diamond gleams and golden glows
 Of amber 'gainst their faces levelling.
 Joyous, and many as the leaves in spring,
 Still onward ; still the splendour gradual swell'd.
 Rich opal domes were seen, on high upheld
 By jasper pillars, letting through their shafts
 A blush of coral. Copious wonder-draughts
 Each gazer drank ; and deeper drank more near :
 For what poor mortals fragment up, as mere
 As marble was their lavish, to the vast
 Of one fair palace, that far, far surpass'd,
 Even for common bulk, those olden three,
 Memphis, and Babylon, and Nineveh.

As large, as bright, as colour'd as the bow
 Of Iris, when unfading it doth show
 Beyond a silvery shower, was the arch
 Through which this Paphian army took its march,

Into the outer courts of Neptune's state :
 Whence could be seen, direct, a golden gate,
 To which the leaders sped ; but not half raught
 Ere it burst open swift as fairy thought,
 And made those dazzled thousands veil their eyes
 Like callow eagles at the first sunrise.
 Soon with an eagle nativeness their gaze
 Ripe from hue-golden swoons took all the blaze,
 And then, behold ! large Neptune on his throne
 Of emerald deep : yet not exalt alone ;
 At his right hand stood winged Love, and on
 His left sat smiling Beauty's paragon.

Far as the mariner on highest mast
 Can see all round upon the calmed vast,
 So wide was Neptune's hall : and as the blue
 Doth vault the waters, so the waters drew
 Their doming curtains, high, magnificent,
 Awed from the throne aloof ;— and when storm-rent
 Disclosed the thunder-gloomings in Jove's air ;
 But soothed as now, flash'd sudden everywhere,
 Noiseless, sub-marine cloudlets, glittering
 Death to a human eye : for there did spring
 From natural west, and east, and south, and north,
 A light as of four sunsets, blazing forth
 A gold-green zenith 'bove the Sea-God's head.
 Of lucid depth the floor, and far outspread
 As breezeless lake, on which the slim canoe
 Of feather'd Indian darts about, as through
 The delicatest air : air verily,
 But for the portraiture of clouds and sky :
 This palace floor breath-air, — but for the amaze
 Of deep-seen wonders motionless, — and blaze
 Of the dome pomp, reflected in extremes,
 Globing a golden sphere.

They stood in dreams
 Till Triton blew his horn. The palace rang ;

The Nereids danced; the Syrens faintly sang;
 And the great Sea-King bow'd his dripping head.
 Then Love took wing, and from his pinions shed
 On all the multitude a nectarous dew.
 The ooze-born Goddess beckoned and drew
 Fair Scylla and her guides to conference;
 And when they reach'd the throned eminence
 She kiss'd the sea-nymph's cheek, who sat her down
 A toying with the doves. Then, "Mighty crown
 And sceptre of this kingdom!" Venus said,
 "Thy vows were on a time to Nais paid:
 Behold!" — Two copious tear-drops instant fell
 From the God's large eyes; he smiled delectable,
 And over Glaucus held his blessing hands. —
 "Endymion! Ah! still wandering in the bands
 Of love? Now this is cruel. Since the hour
 I met thee in earth's bosom, all my power
 Have I put forth to serve thee. What, not yet
 Escaped from dull mortality's harsh net?
 A little patience, youth! 'twill not be long,
 Or I am skilless quite: an idle tongue,
 A humid eye, and steps luxurious,
 Where these are new and strange, are ominous.
 Ay, I have seen these signs in one of heaven,
 When others were all blind; and were I given
 To utter secrets, haply I might say
 Some pleasant words: but Love will have his day.
 So wait awhile expectant. Pr'ythee soon,
 Even in the passing of thine honey-moon,
 Visit my Cytherea: thou wilt find
 Cupid well-natured, my Adonis kind;
 And pray persuade with thee — Ah, I have done,
 All blisses be upon thee, my sweet son!" —
 Thus the fair Goddess: while Endymion
 Knelt to receive those accents halcyon.

Meantime a glorious revelry began
 Before the Water-Monarch. Nectar ran

In courteous fountains to all cups outreach'd ;
 And plunder'd vines, teeming exhaustless, pleach'd
 New growth about each shell and pendent lyre ;
 The which, in entangling for their fire,
 Pull'd down fresh foliage and coverture
 For dainty toy. Cupid, empire-sure,
 Flutter'd and laugh'd, and oft-times through the
 throng
 Made a delighted way. Then dance, and song,
 And garlanding, grew wild ; and pleasure reign'd.
 In harmless tendril they each other chain'd,
 And strove who should be smother'd deepest in
 Fresh crush of leaves.

O 'tis a very sin
 For one so weak to venture his poor verse
 In such a place as this. O do not curse,
 High Muses ! let him hurry to the ending.

All suddenly were silent. A soft blending
 Of dulcet instruments came charmingly ;
 And then a hymn.

“ King of the stormy sea !
 Brother of Jove, and co-inheritor
 Of elements ! Eternally before
 Thee the waves awful bow. Fast, stubborn rock,
 At thy fear'd trident shrinking, doth unlock
 Its deep foundations, hissing into foam.
 All mountain-rivers lost, in the wide home
 Of thy capacious bosom ever flow.
 Thou frownest, and old Æolus thy foe
 Skulks to his cavern, 'mid the gruff complaint
 Of all his rebel tempests. Dark clouds faint
 When, from thy diadem, a silver gleam
 Slants over blue dominion. Thy bright team
 Gulfs in the morning light, and scuds along
 To bring thee nearer to that golden song

Apollo singeth, while his chariot
 Waits at the doors of heaven. Thou art not
 For scenes like this: an empire stern hast thou,
 And it hath furrow'd that large front: yet now,
 As newly come of heaven, dost thou sit
 To blend and interknit
 Subdued majesty with this glad time.
 O shell-born King sublime!
 We lay our hearts before thee evermore —
 We sing, and we adore!

“ Breathe softly, flutes ;

Be tender of your strings, ye soothing lutes ;
 Nor be the trumpet heard ! O vain, O vain !
 Not flowers budding in an April rain,
 Nor breath of sleeping dove, nor river's flow —
 No, nor the Æolian twang of Love's own bow,
 Can mingle music fit for the soft ear
 Of goddess Cytherea !
 Yet deign, white Queen of Beauty, thy fair eyes
 On our soul's sacrifice.

“ Bright-winged Child !

Who has another care when thou hast smiled ?
 Unfortunates on earth, we see at last
 All death-shadows, and glooms that overcast
 Our spirits, fann'd away by thy light pinions.
 O sweetest essence ! sweetest of all minions !
 God of warm pulses, and dishevell'd hair,
 And panting bosoms bare !
 Dear unseen light in darkness ! eclipser
 Of light in light ! delicious poisoner !
 Thy venom'd goblet will we quaff until
 We fill — we fill !
 And by thy Mother's lips — ”

Was heard no more
 For clamour, when the golden palace-door

Open'd again, and from without, in shone
 A new magnificence. On oozy throne
 Smooth-moving came Oceanus the old,
 To take a latest glimpse at his sheepfold,
 Before he went into his quiet cave
 To muse for ever — Then, a lucid wave,
 Scoop'd from its trembling sisters of mid-sea,
 Afloat, and pillowing up the majesty
 Of Doris, and the Ægean seer, her spouse —
 Next, on a dolphin, clad in laurel boughs,
 Theban Amphion leaning on his lute :
 His fingers went across it — All were mute
 To gaze on Amphitrite, queen of pearls,
 And Thetis pearly too. —

The palace whirls

Around giddy Endymion ; seeing he
 Was there far strayed from mortality.
 He could not bear it — shut his eyes in vain ;
 Imagination gave a dizzier pain.
 “ O I shall die ! sweet Venus, be my stay !
 Where is my lovely mistress ? Well-away !
 I die — I hear her voice — I feel my wing — ”
 At Neptune's feet he sank. A sudden ring
 Of Nereids were about him, in kind strife
 To usher back his spirit into life :
 But still he slept. At last they interwove
 Their cradling arms, and purposed to convey
 Towards a crystal bower far away.

Lo ! while slow carried through the pitying
 crowd,
 To his inward senses these words spake aloud ;
 Written in star-light on the dark above :
 “ Dearest Endymion ! my entire love !
 How have I dwelt in fear of fate ; 'tis done —
 Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.
 Arise then ! for the hen-dove shall not hatch

Her ready eggs, before I'll kissing snatch
Thee into endless heaven. Awake! awake!"

The youth at once arose : a placid lake
Came quiet to his eyes ; and forest green,
Cooler than all the wonder he had seen,
Lull'd with its simple song his fluttering breast.
How happy once again in grassy nest!



BOOK IV.

MUSE of my native land ! loftiest Muse !
O first-born on the mountains ! By the hues
Of heaven on the spiritual air begot :
Long didst thou sit alone in northern grot,
While yet our England was a wolfish den ;
Before our forests heard the talk of men ;
Before the first of Druids was a child ; —
Long didst thou sit amid our regions wild,
Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude.
There came an eastern voice of solemn mood : —
Yet wast thou patient. Then sang forth the Nine,
Apollo's garland : — yet didst thou divine
Such home-bred glory, that they cried in vain,
" Come hither, Sister of the Island ! " Plain
Spake fair Aŭsonia ; and once more she spake
A higher summons : — still didst thou betake
Thee to thy native hopes. O thou hast won
A full accomplishment ! The thing is done,
Which undone, these our latter days had risen
On barren souls. Great Muse, thou know'st what
 prison
Of flesh and bone, curbs, and confines, and frets
Our spirits' wings : despondency besets
Our pillows ; and the fresh to-morrow morn
Seems to give forth its light in very scorn

Of our dull, uninspired, snail-paced lives.
 Long have I said, how happy he who shrives
 To thee! But then I thought on poets gone,
 And could not pray: — nor can I now — so on
 I move to the end in lowliness of heart. —

“ Ah, woe is me! that I should fondly part
 From my dear native land! Ah, foolish maid!
 Glad was the hour, when, with thee, myriads bade
 Adieu to Ganges and their pleasant fields!
 To one so friendless the clear freshet yields
 A bitter coolness; the ripe grape is sour:
 Yet I would have, great gods! but one short hour
 Of native air — let me but die at home.”

Endymion to heaven's airy dome
 Was offering up a hecatomb of vows,
 When these words reach'd him. Whereupon he bows
 His head through thorny-green entanglement
 Of underwood, and to the sound is bent,
 Anxious as hind towards her hidden fawn.

“ Is no one near to help me? No fair dawn
 Of life from charitable voice? No sweet saying
 To set my dull and sadden'd spirit playing?
 No hand to toy with mine? No lips so sweet
 That I may worship them? No eyelids meet
 To twinkle on my bosom? No one dies
 Before me, till from these enslaving eyes
 Redemption sparkles! — I am sad and lost.”

Thou, Carian lord, hadst better have been tost
 Into a whirlpool. Vanish into air,
 Warm mountaineer! for canst thou only bear
 A woman's sigh alone and in distress?
 See not her charms! Is Phœbe passionless?
 Phœbe is fairer far — O gaze no more: —
 Yet if thou wilt behold all beauty's store,

Behold her panting in the forest grass !
 Do not those curls of glossy jet surpass
 For tenderness the arms so idly lain
 Amongst them ? Feelest not a kindred pain,
 To see such lovely eyes in swimming search
 After some warm delight, that seems to perch
 Dovelike in the dim cell lying beyond
 Their upper lids ? — Hist !

“ O for Hermes' wand
 To touch this flower into human shape !
 That woodland Hyacinthus could escape
 From his green prison, and here kneeling down
 Call me his queen, his second life's fair crown !
 Ah me, how I could love ! — My soul doth melt
 For the unhappy youth — Love ! I have felt
 So faint a kindness, such a meek surrender
 To what my own full thoughts had made too tender,
 That but for tears my life had fled away !
 Ye deaf and senseless minutes of the day,
 And thou, old forest, hold ye this for true,
 There is no lightning, no authentic dew
 But in the eye of love : there's not a sound,
 Melodious howsoever, can confound
 The heavens and earth in one to such a death
 As doth the voice of love : there's not a breath
 Will mingle kindly with the meadow air,
 Till it has panted round, and stolen a share
 Of passion from the heart ! ” —

Upon a bough
 He leant, wretched. He surely cannot now
 Thirst for another love : O impious,
 That he can even dream upon it thus !
 Thought he, “ Why am I not as are the dead,
 Since to a woe like this I have been led
 Through the dark earth, and through the wondrous
 sea ?

Goddess ! I love thee not the less : from thee
 By Juno's smile I turn not — no, no, no —
 While the great waters are at ebb and flow, —
 I have a triple soul ! O fond pretence —
 For both, for both my love is so immense,
 I feel my heart is cut in twain for them."

And so he groan'd, as one by beauty slain.
 The lady's heart beat quick, and he could see
 Her gentle bosom heave tumultuously.
 He sprang from his green covert : there she lay,
 Sweet as a musk-rose upon new-made hay ;
 With all her limbs on tremble, and her eyes
 Shut softly up alive. To speak he tries :
 " Fair damsel, pity me ! forgive that I
 Thus violate thy bower's sanctity !
 O pardon me, for I am full of grief —
 Grief born of thee, young angel ! fairest thief !
 Who stolen hast away the wings wherewith
 I was to top the heavens. Dear maid, sith
 Thou art my executioner, and I feel
 Loving and hatred, misery and weal,
 Will in a few short hours be nothing to me,
 And all my story that much passion slew me ;
 Do smile upon the evening of my days ;
 And, for my tortured brain begins to craze,
 Be thou my nurse ; and let me understand
 How dying I shall kiss that lily hand. —
 Dost weep for me ! Then should I be content.
 Scowl on, ye fates ! until the firmament
 Outblackens Erebus, and the full-cavern'd earth
 Crumbles into itself. By the cloud-girth
 Of Jove, those tears have given me a thirst
 To meet oblivion." — As her heart would burst
 The maiden sobb'd awhile, and then replied :
 " Why must such desolation betide
 As that thou speakest of ? Are not these green
 nooks

Empty of all misfortune? Do the brooks
 Utter a gorgon voice? Does yonder thrush,
 Schooling its half-fledged little ones to brush
 About the dewy forest, whisper tales? —
 Speak not of grief, young stranger, or cold snails
 Will slime the rose to-night. Though if thou wilt,
 Methinks 'twould be a guilt — a very guilt —
 Not to companion thee, and sigh away
 The light — the dusk — the dark — till break of
 day!”

“Dear lady,” said Endymion, “’tis past:
 I love thee! and my days can never last.
 That I may pass in patience still speak:
 Let me have music dying, and I seek
 No more delight — I bid adieu to all.
 Didst thou not after other climates call,
 And murmur about Indian streams?” — Then she,
 Sitting beneath the midmost forest tree,
 For pity sang this roundelay —

“O Sorrow!
 Why dost borrow
 The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips? —
 To give maiden blushes
 To the white rose bushes?
 Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips?”

“O Sorrow!
 Why dost borrow
 The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye? —
 To give the glowworm light?
 Or, on a moonless night,
 To tinge, on syren shores, the salt sea-spray?”

“O Sorrow!
 Why dost borrow
 The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue? —
 To give at evening pale

Unto the nightingale,
That thou mayst listen the cold dews among ?

“ O Sorrow !
Why dost borrow
Heart's lightness from the merriment of May ?
A lover would not tread
A cowslip on the head,
Though he should dance from eve till peep of
day —
Nor any drooping flower
Held sacred for thy bower,
Wherever he may sport himself and play.

“ To Sorrow,
I bade good morrow,
And thought to leave her far away behind ;
But cheerly, cheerly,
She loves me dearly ;
She is so constant to me, and so kind :
I would deceive her,
And so leave her,
But ah ! she is so constant and so kind.

“ Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,
I sat a weeping : in the whole world wide
There was no one to ask me why I wept —
And so I kept
Brimming the water-lily cups with tears
Cold as my fears.

Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,
I sat a weeping : what enamour'd bride,
Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds,
But hides and shrouds
Beneath dark palm-trees by a river side ?

“ And as I sat, over the light blue hills
There came a noise of revellers : the rills

Into the wide stream came of purple hue —
 'Twas Bacchus and his crew !
 The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills
 From kissing cymbals made a merry din —
 'Twas Bacchus and his kin !
 Like to a moving vintage down they came,
 Crown'd with green leaves, and faces all on
 flame ;
 All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,
 To scare thee, Melancholy !
 O then, O then, thou wast a simple name !
 And I forgot thee, as the berried holly
 By shepherds is forgotten, when in June,
 Tall chestnuts keep away the sun and moon : —
 I rush'd into the folly !

“ Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,
 Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood,
 With sidelong laughing ;
 And little rills of crimson wine imbrued
 His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough white
 For Venus' pearly bite ;
 And near him rode Silenus on his ass,
 Pelted with flowers as he on did pass
 Tipsily quaffing.

“ Whence came ye, merry Damsels ! whence
 came ye,
 So many, and so many, and such glee ?
 Why have ye left your bowers desolate,
 Your lutes, and gentler fate ?
 ‘ We follow Bacchus ! Bacchus on the wing,
 A conquering !
 Bacchus, young Bacchus ! good or ill betide,
 We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide : —
 Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
 To our wild minstrelsy ! ’

" Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs! whence came ye,
 So many, and so many, and such glee?
 Why have ye left your forest haunts, why left
 Your nuts in oak-tree cleft? —
 ' For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree;
 For wine we left our heath, and yellow brooms,
 And cold mushrooms;
 For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth;
 Great god of breathless cups and chirping mirth!
 Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
 To our mad minstrelsy!'

" Over wide streams and mountains great we went,
 And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent,
 Onward the tiger and the leopard pants,
 With Asian elephants:
 Onward these myriads — with song and dance,
 With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians' prance,
 Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,
 Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,
 Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil
 Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers' toil:
 With toying oars and silken sails they glide,
 Nor care for wind and tide.
 Mounted on panthers' furs and lions' manes,
 From rear to van they scour about the plains;
 A three days' journey in a moment done;
 And always, at the rising of the sun,
 About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn,
 On spleenful unicorn.

" I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown
 Before the vine-wreath crown!
 I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing
 To the silver cymbals' ring!
 I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce
 Old Tartary the fierce!
 The kings of Ind their jewel-sceptres vail,

And from their treasures scatter pearled hail;
 Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,
 And all his priesthood moans,
 Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.
 Into these regions came I, following him,
 Sick-hearted, weary — so I took a whim
 To stray away into these forests drear,
 Alone, without a peer:
 And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

“ Young Stranger!
 I've been a ranger
 In search of pleasure throughout every clime;
 Alas! 'tis not for me:
 Bewitch'd I sure must be,
 To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

“ Come then, Sorrow,
 Sweetest Sorrow!
 Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast:
 I thought to leave thee,
 And deceive thee,
 But now of all the world I love thee best.

“ There is not one,
 No, no, not one
 But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid;
 Thou art her mother,
 And her brother,
 Her playmate, and her wooer in the shade.”

O what a sigh she gave in finishing,
 And look, quite dead to every worldly thing!
 Endymion could not speak, but gazed on her:
 And listen'd to the wind that now did stir
 About the crisped oaks full drearily,
 Yet with as sweet a softness as might be
 Remember'd from its velvet summer song.

At last he said : " Poor lady ! how thus long
 Have I been able to endure that voice ?
 Fair Melody ! kind Syren ! I've no choice ;
 I must be thy sad servant evermore :
 I cannot choose but kneel here and adore.
 Alas, I must not think — by Phœbe, no !
 Let me not think, soft Angel ! shall it be so ?
 Say, beautifullest, shall I never think ?
 O thou couldst foster me beyond the brink
 Of recollection ! make my watchful care
 Close up its bloodshot eyes, nor see despair !
 Do gently murder half my soul, and I
 Shall feel the other half so utterly ! —
 I'm giddy at that cheek so fair and smooth ;
 O let it blush so ever : let it soothe
 My madness ! let it mantle rosy-warm
 With the tinge of love, panting in safe alarm.
 This cannot be thy hand, and yet it is ;
 And this is sure thine other softling — this
 Thine own fair bosom, and I am so near !
 Wilt fall asleep ? O let me sip that tear !
 And whisper one sweet word that I may know
 This is this world — sweet dewy blossom ! " — **WOE**
WOE ! WOE TO THAT ENDYMION ! WHERE IS
HE ? —

Even these words went echoing dismally
 Through the wide forest — a most fearful tone,
 Like one repenting in his latest moan ;
 And while it died away a shade pass'd by,
 As of a thunder-cloud. When arrows fly
 Through the thick branches, poor ring-doves sleek
 forth
 Their timid necks and tremble ; so these both
 Leant to each other trembling, and sat so
 Waiting for some destruction — when lo !
 Foot-feather'd Mercury appear'd sublime
 Beyond the tall tree tops ; and in less time
 Than shoots the slanted hail-storm, down he dropp'd

Towards the ground ; but rested not, nor stopp'd
One moment from his home : only the sword
He with his wand light touch'd, and heavenward
Swifter than sight was gone — even before
The teeming earth a sudden witness bore
Of his swift magic. Diving swans appear
Above the crystal circlings white and clear ;
And catch the cheated eye in wild surprise,
How they can dive in sight and unseen rise —
So from the turf outsprang two steeds jet-black,
Each with large dark blue wings upon his back.
The youth of Caria placed the lovely dame
On one, and felt himself in spleen to tame
The other's fierceness. Through the air they flew,
High as the eagles. Like two drops of dew
Exhaled to Phœbus' lips, away they are gone,
Far from the earth away — unseen, alone,
Among cool clouds and winds, but that the free
The buoyant life of song can floating be
Above their heads, and follow them untired.
Muse of my native land ! am I inspired ?
This is the giddy air, and I must spread
Wide pinions to keep here ; nor do I dread
Or height, or depth, or width, or any chance
Precipitous : I have beneath my glance
Those towering horses and their mournful freight.
Could I thus sail, and see, and thus await
Fearless for power of thought, without thine aid ?
There is a sleepy dusk, an odorous shade
From some approaching wonder, and behold
Those winged steeds, with snorting nostrils bold
Snuff at its faint extreme, and seem to tire,
Dying to embers from their native fire !

There curl'd a purple mist around them ; soon,
It seem'd as when around the pale new moon
Sad Zephyr droops the clouds like weeping willow :
'Twas Sleep slow journeying with head on pillow.

For the first time, since he came nigh dead-born
 From the old womb of night, his cave forlorn
 Had he left more forlorn; for the first time,
 He felt aloof the day and morning's prime —
 Because into his depth Cimmerian
 There came a dream, showing how a young man,
 Ere a lean bat could plump its wintry skin,
 Would at high Jove's empyreal footstool win
 An immortality, and how espouse
 Jove's daughter, and be reckon'd of his house.
 Now was he slumbering towards heaven's gate,
 That he might at the threshold one hour wait
 To hear the marriage melodies, and then
 Sink downward to his dusky cave again:
 His litter of smooth semiluculent mist,
 Diversely tinged with rose and amethyst,
 Puzzled those eyes that for the centre sought;
 And scarcely for one moment could be caught
 His sluggish form reposing motionless.
 Those two on winged steeds, with all the stress
 Of vision search'd for him, as one would look
 Athwart the shallows of a river nook
 To catch a glance at silver-throated eels, —
 Or from old Skiddaw's top, when fog conceals
 His rugged forehead in a mantle pale,
 With an eye-guess towards some pleasant vale,
 Descry a favourite hamlet faint and far.

These raven horses, though they foster'd are
 Of earth's splenetic fire, dully drop
 Their full-vein'd ears, nostrils blood wide, and stop;
 Upon the spiritless mist have they outspread
 Their ample feathers, are in slumber dead, —
 And on those pinions, level in mid-air,
 Endymion sleepeth and the lady fair.
 Slowly they sail, slowly as icy isle
 Upon a calm sea drifting: and meanwhile
 The mournful wanderer dreams. Behold! he walks

On heaven's pavement, brotherly he talks
To divine powers: from his hand full fain
Juno's proud birds are pecking pearly grain:
He tries the nerve of Phæbus' golden bow,
And asketh where the golden apples grow:
Upon his arm he braces Pallas' shield,
And strives in vain to unsettle and wield
A Jovian thunderbolt: arch Hebe brings
A full-brimm'd goblet, dances lightly, sings
And tantalizes long; at last he drinks,
And lost in pleasure, at her feet he sinks,
Touching with dazzled lips her starlight hand,
He blows a bugle, — an ethereal band
Are visible above: the Seasons four, —
Green-kirtled Spring, flush Summer, golden store
In Autumn's sickle, Winter frosty hoar,
Join dance with shadowy Hours; while still the blast,
In swells unmitigated, still doth last
To sway their floating morris. "Whose is this?
Whose bugle?" he inquires: they smile — "O Dis!
Why is this mortal here? Dost thou not know
Its mistress' lips? Not thou? — 'Tis Dian's: lo!
She rises crescented!" He looks, 'tis she,
His very goddess: good-bye earth, and sea,
And air, and pains, and care, and suffering;
Good-bye to all but love! Then doth he spring
Towards her, and awakes — and, strange, o'erhead,
Of those same fragrant exhalations bred,
Beheld awake his very dream: the gods
Stood smiling; merry Hebe laughs and nods;
And Phæbe bends towards him crescented.
O state perplexing! On the pinion bed,
Too well awake, he feels the panting side
Of his delicious lady. He who died
For soaring too audacious in the sun,
Where that same treacherous wax began to run,
Felt not more tongue-tied than Endymion.
His heart leapt up as to its rightful throne,

To that fair-shadow'd passion pulsed its way —
 Ah, what perplexity! Ah, well a-day!
 So fond, so beauteous was his bed-fellow,
 He could not help but kiss her: then he grew
 Awhile forgetful of all beauty save
 Young Phœbe's, golden-hair'd; and so 'gan crave
 Forgiveness: yet he turn'd once more to look
 At the sweet sleeper, — all his soul was shook, —
 She press'd his hand in slumber; so once more
 He could not help but kiss her and adore.
 At this the shadow wept, melting away.
 The Latmian started up: "Bright goddess, stay!
 Search my most hidden breast! By truth's own
 tongue,
 I have no dædale heart; why is it wrung
 To desperation? Is there nought for me,
 Upon the bourne of bliss, but misery?"

These words awoke the stranger of dark tresses:
 Her dawning love-look rapt Endymion blesses
 With 'haviour soft. Sleep yawn'd from underneath.
 "Thou swan of Ganges, let us no more breathe
 This murky phantasm! thou contented seem'st
 Pillow'd in lovely idleness, nor dream'st
 What horrors may discomfort thee and me.
 Ah, shouldst thou die from my heart-treachery! —
 Yet did she merely weep — her gentle soul
 Hath no revenge in it; as it is whole
 In tenderness, would I were whole in love!
 Can I prize thee, fair maid, all price above,
 Even when I feel as true as innocence!
 I do, I do. — What is this soul then? Whence
 Came it? It does not seem my own, and I
 Have no self-passion or identity.
 Some fearful end must be; where, where is it?
 By Nemesis! I see my spirit flit
 Alone about the dark — Forgive me, sweet!
 Shall we away?" He roused the steeds; they
 beat

Their wings chivalrous into the clear air,
Leaving old Sleep within his vapoury lair.

The good-night blush of eve was waning slow,
And Vesper, risen star, began to throe
In the dusk heavens silvery, when they
Thus sprang direct towards the Galaxy.
Nor did speed hinder converse soft and strange —
Eternal oaths and vows they interchange,
In such wise, in such temper, so aloof
Up in the winds, beneath a starry roof,
So witless of their doom, that verily
'Tis well nigh past man's search their hearts to see;
Whether they wept, or laugh'd, or grieved, or
toy'd —
Most like with joy gone mad, with sorrow cloy'd.

Full facing their swift flight, from ebon streak,
The moon put forth a little diamond peak,
No bigger than an unobserved star,
Or tiny point of fairy scimeter;
Bright signal that she only stoop'd to tie
Her silver sandals, ere deliciously
She bow'd into the heavens her timid head.
Slowly she rose, as though she would have fled,
While to his lady meek the Carian turn'd,
To mark if her dark eyes had yet discern'd
This beauty in its birth — Despair! despair!
He saw her body fading gaunt and spare
In the cold moonshine. Straight he seized her wrist;
It melted from his grasp; her hand he kiss'd,
And, horror! kiss'd his own — he was alone.
Her steed a little higher soar'd, and then
Dropt hawk-wise to the earth.

There lies a den,
Beyond the seeming confines of the space
Made for the soul to wander in and trace

Its own existence, of remotest glooms.
 Dark regions are around it, where the tombs
 Of buried griefs the spirit sees, but scarce
 One hour doth linger weeping, for the pierce
 Of new-born woe it feels more inly smart :
 And in these regions many a venom'd dart
 At random flies ; they are the proper home
 Of every ill : the man is yet to come
 Who hath not journey'd in this native hell.
 But few have ever felt how calm and well
 Sleep may be had in that deep den of all.
 There anguish does not sting, nor pleasure pall ;
 Woe-hurricanes beat ever at the gate,
 Yet all is still within and desolate.
 Beset with painful gusts, within ye hear
 No sound so loud as when on curtain'd bier
 The death-watch tick is stifled. Enter none
 Who strive therefore ; on the sudden it is won.
 Just when the sufferer begins to burn,
 Then it is free to him ; and from an urn,
 Still fed by melting ice, he takes a draught —
 Young Semele such richness never quaff'd
 In her maternal longing. Happy gloom !
 Dark Paradise ! where pale becomes the bloom
 Of health by due ; where silence dreariest
 Is most articulate ; where hopes infest ;
 Where those eyes are the brightest far that keep
 Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.
 O happy spirit-home ! O wondrous soul !
 Pregnant with such a den to save the whole
 In thine own depth. Hail, gentle Carian !
 For, never since thy griefs and woes began,
 Hast thou felt so content : a grievous feud
 Hath led thee to this Cave of Quietude.
 Ay, his lull'd soul was there, although upborne
 With dangerous speed : and so he did not mourn
 Because he knew not whither he was going.
 So happy was he, not the aerial blowing

Of trumpets at clear parley from the east
 Could rouse from that fine relish, that high feast.
 They stung the feather'd horse ; with fierce alarm
 He flapp'd towards the sound. Alas ! no charm
 Could lift Endymion's head, or he had view'd
 A skyey mask, a pinion'd multitude, —
 And silvery was its passing : voices sweet
 Warbling the while as if to lull and greet
 The wanderer in his path. Thus warbled they,
 While past the vision went in bright array.

“ Who, who from Dian's feast would be away ?
 For all the golden bowers of the day
 Are empty left ? Who, who away would be
 From Cynthia's wedding and festivity ?
 Not Hesperus : lo ! upon his silver wings
 He leans away for highest heaven and sings,
 Snapping his lucid fingers merrily ! —
 Ah, Zephyrus ! art here, and Flora too ?
 Ye tender bibbers of the rain and dew,
 Young playmates of the rose and daffodil,
 Be careful, ere ye enter in, to fill

Your baskets high
 With fennel green, and balm, and golden pines,
 Savory latter-mint, and columbines,
 Cool parsley, basil sweet, and sunny thyme ;
 Yea, every flower and leaf of every clime,
 All gather'd in the dewy morning : hie

Away ! fly, fly ! —
 Crystalline brother of the belt of heaven,
 Aquarius ! to whom king Jove has given
 Two liquid pulse streams 'stead of feather'd wings,
 Two fanlike fountains, — thine illuminings

For Dian play :
 Dissolve the frozen purity of air ;
 Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare
 Show cold through watery pinions ; make more
 bright

The Star-Queen's crescent on her marriage night ;

Haste, haste away !

Castor has tamed the planet Lion, see !

And of the Bear has Pollux mastery :

A third is in the race ! who is the third,

Speeding away swift as the eagle bird ?

The ramping Centaur !

The Lion's mane 's on end : the Bear how fierce !

The Centaur's arrow ready seems to pierce

Some enemy : far forth his bow is bent

Into the blue of heaven. He'll be shent,

Pale unrelentor,

When he shall hear the wedding lutes a playing. —

Andromeda ! sweet woman ! why delaying

So timidly among the stars : come hither !

Join this bright throng, and nimbly follow whither

They all are going.

Danae's Son, before Jove newly bow'd,

Has wept for thee, calling to Jove aloud.

Thee, gentle lady, did he disenthral :

Ye shall for ever live and love, for all

Thy tears are flowing. —

By Daphne's fright, behold Apollo !” —

More

Endymion heard not : down his steed him bore,

Prone to the green head of a misty hill.

His first touch of the earth went nigh to kill.

“ Alas !” said he, “ were I but always borne

Through dangerous winds, had but my footsteps

worn

A path in hell, for ever would I bless

Horrors which nourish an uneasiness

For my own sullen conquering ; to him

Who lives beyond earth's boundary, grief is dim,

Sorrow is but a shadow : now I see

The grass ; I feel the solid ground — Ah, me !

It is thy voice — divinest ! Where ? — who ? who
Left thee so quiet on this bed of dew ?
Behold upon this happy earth we are ;
Let us aye love each other ; let us fare
On forest-fruits, and never, never go
Among the abodes of mortals here below,
Or be by phantoms duped. O destiny !
Into a labyrinth now my soul would fly,
But with thy beauty will I deaden it.
Where didst thou melt to ? By thee will I sit
For ever : let our fate stop here — a kid
I on this spot will offer : Pan will bid
Us live in peace, in love and peace among
His forest wildernesses. I have clung
To nothing, loved a nothing, nothing seen
Or felt but a great dream ! Oh, I have been
Presumptuous against love, against the sky,
Against all elements, against the tie
Of mortals each to each, against the blooms
Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs
Of heroes gone ! Against his proper glory
Has my own soul conspired : so my story
Will I to children utter, and repent.
There never lived a mortal man, who bent
His appetite beyond his natural sphere,
But starved and died. My sweetest Indian, here,
Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast
My life from too thin breathing : gone and past
Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone, farewell !
And air of visions, and the monstrous swell
Of visionary seas ! No, never more
Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore
Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast.
Adieu, my daintiest Dream ! although so vast
My love is still for thee. The hour may come
When we shall meet in pure elysium.
On earth I may not love thee, and therefore
Doves will I offer up, and sweetest store

All through the teeming year : so thou wilt shine
 On me, and on this damsel fair of mine,
 And bless our simple lives. My Indian bliss !
 My river-lily bud ! one human kiss !
 One sigh of real breath — one gentle squeeze,
 Warm as a dove's nest among summer trees,
 And warm with dew at ooze from living blood !
 Whither didst melt ? Ah, what of that ! — all good
 We'll talk about — no more of dreaming. — Now,
 Where shall our dwelling be ? Under the brow
 Of some steep mossy hill, where ivy dun
 Would hide us up, although spring leaves were
 none ;
 And where dark yew-trees, us we rustle through,
 Will drop their scarlet-berry cups of dew !
 O thou would'st joy to live in such a place !
 Dusk for our loves, yet light enough to grace
 Those gentle limbs on mossy bed reclined :
 For by one step the blue sky shouldst thou find,
 And by another, in deep dell below,
 See, through the trees, a little river go
 All in its mid-day gold and glimmering.
 Honey from out the gnarled hive I'll bring,
 And apples, wan with sweetness, gather thee, —
 Cresses that grow where no man may them see,
 And sorrel untorn by the dew-claw'd stag :
 Pipes will I fashion of the syrinx flag,
 That thou mayst always know whither I roam,
 When it shall please thee in our quiet home
 To listen and think of love. Still let me speak ;
 Still let me dive into the joy I seek, —
 For yet the past doth prison me. The rill,
 Thou haply mayst delight in, will I fill
 With fairy fishes from the mountain tarn,
 And thou shalt feed them from the squirrel's barn.
 Its bottom will I strew with amber shells,
 And pebbles blue from deep enchanted wells.
 Its sides I'll plant with dew-sweet eglantine,

And honeysuckles full of clear bee-wine.
 I will entice this crystal rill to trace
 Love's silver name upon the meadow's face.
 I'll kneel to Vesta, for a flame of fire ;
 And to god Phœbus, for a golden lyre ;
 To Empress Dian, for a hunting-spear ;
 To Vesper, for a taper silver-clear,
 That I may see thy beauty through the night ;
 To Flora, and a nightingale shall light
 Tame on thy finger ; to the River-gods
 And they shall bring thee taper fishing-rods
 Of gold, and lines of naiads' long bright tress.
 Heaven shield thee for thine utter loveliness !
 Thy mossy footstool shall the altar be
 'Fore which I'll bend, bending, dear love, to thee :
 Those lips shall be my Delphos, and shall speak
 Laws to my footsteps, colour to my cheek,
 Trembling or steadfastness to this same voice,
 And of three sweetest pleasurings the choice :
 And that affectionate light, those diamond things,
 Those eyes, those passions, those supreme pearl
 springs,
 Shall be my grief, or twinkle me to pleasure.
 Say, is not bliss within our perfect seizure ?
 Oh that I could not doubt !”

The mountaineer

Thus strove by fancies vain and crude to clear
 His brier'd path to some tranquillity.
 It gave bright gladness to his lady's eye,
 And yet the tears she wept were tears of sorrow ;
 Answering thus, just as the golden morrow
 Beam'd upward from the valleys of the east :
 “ O that the flutter of his heart had ceased,
 Or the sweet name of love had pass'd away !
 Young feather'd tyrant ! by a swift decay
 Wilt thou devote this body to the earth :
 And I do think that at my very birth

I lisp'd thy blooming titles inwardly ;
 For at the first, first dawn and thought of thee,
 With uplift hands I bless'd the stars of heaven.
 Art thou not cruel ? ever have I striven
 To think thee kind, but ah, it will not do !
 When yet a child, I heard that kisses drew
 Favour from thee, and so I kisses gave
 To the void air, bidding them find out love :
 But when I came to feel how far above
 All fancy, pride, and fickle maidenhood,
 All earthly pleasure, all imagined good,
 Was the warm tremble of a devout kiss, —
 Even then that moment, at the thought of this,
 Fainting I fell into a bed of flowers,
 And languish'd there three days. Ye milder
 powers,
 Am I not cruelly wrong'd ? Believe, believe
 Me, dear Endymion, were I to weave
 With my own fancies garlands of sweet life,
 Thou should'st be one of all. Ah, bitter strife !
 I may not be thy love : I am forbidden —
 Indeed I am — thwarted, affrighted, chidden,
 By things I trembled at, and gorgon wrath.
 Twice hast thou ask'd whither I went : henceforth
 Ask me no more ! I may not utter it,
 Nor may I be thy love. We might commit
 Ourselves at once to vengeance : we might die ;
 We might embrace and die : voluptuous thought !
 Enlarge not to my hunger, or I'm caught
 In trammels of perverse deliciousness.
 No, no, that shall not be : thee will I bless,
 And bid a long adieu."

The Carian

No word return'd : both lovelorn, silent, wan,
 Into the valleys green together went.
 Far wandering, they were perforce content
 To sit beneath a fair lone beechen tree ;

Nor at each other gazed, but heavily
Pored on its hazel cirque of shedded leaves.

Endymion! unhappy! it nigh grieves
Me to behold thee thus in last extreme:
Enskied ere this, but truly that I deem
Truth the best music in a first-born song.
Thy lute-voice'd brother will I sing ere long,
And thou shalt aid — hast thou not aided me?
Yes, moonlight Emperor! felicity
Has been thy meed for many thousand years;
Yet often have I, on the brink of tears,
Mourn'd as if yet thou wert a forester; —
Forgetting the old tale.

He did not stir
His eyes from the dead leaves, or one small pulse
Of joy he might have felt. The spirit culls
Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays
Through the old garden-ground of boyish days.
A little onward ran the very stream
By which he took his first soft poppy dream;
And on the very bark 'gainst which he leant
A crescent he had carved, and round it spent
His skill in little stars. The teeming tree
Had swoll'n and green'd the pious character,
But not ta'en out. Why, there was not a slope
Up which he had not fear'd the antelope;
And not a tree, beneath whose rooty shade
He had not with his tamed leopards play'd;
Nor could an arrow light, or javelin,
Fly in the air where his had never been —
And yet he knew it not.

O treachery!
Why does his lady smile, pleasing her eye
With all his sorrowing? He sees her not.
But who so stares on him? His sister sure!

Peona of the woods! — Can she endure? —
 Impossible — how dearly they embrace!
 His lady smiles; delight is in her face;
 It is no treachery.

“ Dear brother mine!

Endymion, weep not so! Why should'st thou pine
 When all great Latmos so exalt will be?
 Thank the great gods, and look not bitterly;
 And speak not one pale word, and sigh no more.
 Sure I will not believe thou hast such store
 Of grief, to last thee to my kiss again.
 Thou surely canst not bear a mind in pain,
 Come hand in hand with one so beautiful.
 Be happy both of you! for I will pull
 The flowers of autumn for your coronals.
 Pan's holy priest for young Endymion calls;
 And when he is restored, thou, fairest dame,
 Shalt be our queen. Now, is it not a shame
 To see ye thus, — not very, very sad?
 Perhaps ye are too happy to be glad:
 O feel as if it were a common day;
 Free-voiced as one who never was away.
 No tongue shall ask, whence come ye? but ye
 shall
 Be gods of your own rest imperial.
 Not even I, for one whole month will pry
 Into the hours that have pass'd us by,
 Since in my arbour I did sing to thee.
 O Hermes! on this very night will be
 A hymning up to Cynthia, queen of light;
 For the soothsayers old saw yesternight
 Good visions in the air, — whence will befall,
 As say these sages, health perpetual
 To shepherds and their flocks; and furthermore,
 In Dian's face they read the gentle lore:
 Therefore for her these vesper-carols are.
 Our friends will all be there from nigh and far.

Many upon thy death have ditties made ;
 And many, even now, their foreheads shade
 With cypress, on a day of sacrifice.
 New singing for our maids shalt thou devise,
 And pluck the sorrow from our huntsmen's brows,
 Tell me, my lady-queen, how to espouse
 This wayward brother to his rightful joys !
 His eyes are on thee bent, as thou didst poise
 His fate most goddess-like. Help me, I pray,
 To lure — Endymion, dear brother, say
 What ails thee ? ” He could bear no more, and so
 Bent his soul fiercely like a spiritual bow,
 And twang'd it inwardly, and calmly said :
 “ I would have thee my only friend, sweet maid !
 My only visitor ! not ignorant though,
 That those deceptions which for pleasure go
 'Mong men, are pleasures real as real may be :
 But there are higher ones I may not see,
 If impiously an earthly realm I take.
 Since I saw thee, I have been wide awake
 Night after night, and day by day, until
 Of the empyrean I have drunk my fill.
 Let it content thee, Sister, seeing me
 More happy than betides mortality.
 A hermit young, I'll live in mossy cave,
 Where thou alone shalt come to me, and lave
 Thy spirit in the wonders I shall tell.
 Through me the shepherd realm shall prosper well ;
 For to thy tongue will I all health confide.
 And for my sake, let this young maid abide
 With thee as a dear sister. Thou alone,
 Peona, mayst return to me. I own
 This may sound strangely : but when, dearest girl,
 Thou seest it for my happiness, no pearl
 Will trespass down those cheeks. Companion fair !
 Wilt be content to dwell with her, to share
 This sister's love with me ? ” Like one resign'd
 And bent by circumstances, and thereby blind

In self-commitment, thus, that meek unknown :
 " Ay, but a buzzing by my ears has flown,
 Of jubilee to Dian : — truth I heard !
 Well then, I see there is no little bird,
 Tender soever, but is Jove's own care.
 Long have I sought for rest, and unaware,
 Behold I find it ! so exalted too !
 So after my own heart ! I knew, I knew
 There was a place untenanted in it ;
 In that same void white Chastity shall sit,
 And monitor me nightly to lone slumber.
 With sanest lips I vow me to the number
 Of Dian's sisterhood ; and kind lady,
 With thy good help, this very night shall see
 My future days to her fane consecrate."

As feels a dreamer what doth most create
 His own particular fright, so these three felt :
 Or like one who, in after ages, knelt
 To Lucifer or Baal, when he'd pine
 After a little sleep : or when in mine
 Far under-ground, a sleeper meets his friends
 Who know him not. Each diligently bends
 Towards common thoughts and things for very
 fear ;
 Striving their ghastly malady to cheer,
 By thinking it a thing of yes and no,
 That housewives talk of. But the spirit-blow
 Was struck, and all were dreamers. At the last
 Endymion said : " Are not our fates all cast ?
 Why stand we here ? Adieu, ye tender pair !
 Adieu ! " Whereat those maidens, with wild stare,
 Walk'd dizzily away. Pained and hot
 His eyes went after them, until they got
 Near to a cypress grove, whose deadly maw,
 In one swift moment, would what then he saw
 Engulf for ever. " Stay," he cried, " ah, stay !
 Turn damsels ! hist ! one word I have to say :

Sweet Indian, I would see thee once again.
It is a thing I dote on : so I'd fain,
Peona, ye should hand in hand repair,
Into those holy groves that silent are
Behind great Dian's temple. I'll be yon,
At Vesper's earliest twinkle — they are gone —
But once, once, once again —" At this he prest
His hands against his face, and then did rest
His head upon a mossy hillock green
And so remain'd as he a corpse had been
All the long day ; save when he scantily lifted
His eyes abroad, to see how shadows shifted
With the slow move of time, — sluggish and weary
Until the poplar tops, in journey dreary,
Had reach'd the river's brim. Then up he rose,
And, slowly as that very river flows,
Walk'd towards the temple-grove with this lament :
" Why such a golden eve ? The breeze is sent
Careful and soft, that not a leaf may fall
Before the serene father of them all
Bows down his summer head below the west.
Now am I of breath, speech, and speed possest,
But at the setting I must bid adieu
To her for the last time. Night will strew
On the damp grass myriads of lingering leaves,
And with them shall I die ; nor much it grieves
To die, when summer dies on the cold sward.
Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord
Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies,
Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour-roses ;
My kingdom 's at its death, and just it is
That I should die with it : so in all this
We miscall grief, bale, sorrow, heart-break, woe,
What is there to plain of ? By Titan's foe
I am but rightly served." So saying, he
Tripp'd lightly on, in sort of deathful glee ;
Laughing at the clear stream and setting sun,
As though they jests had been : nor had he done

His laugh at nature's holy countenance,
Until that grove appear'd, as if perchance,
And then his tongue with sober seemlihd
Gave utterance as he enter'd: "Ha!" he said,
"King of the butterflies; but by this gloom,
And by old Rhadamanthus' tongue of doom,
This dusk religion, pomp of solitude,
And the Promethean clay by thief endued,
By old Saturnus' forelock, by his head
Shook with eternal palsy, I did wed
Myself to things of light from infancy;
And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,
Is sure enough to make a mortal man
Grow impious." So he inwardly began
On things for which no wording can be found;
Deeper and deeper sinking, until drown'd
Beyond the reach of music: for the choir
Of Cynthia he heard not, though rough brier
Nor muffling thicket interposed to dull
The Vesper hymn, far swollen, soft and full,
Through the dark pillars of those sylvan aisles.
He saw not the two maidens, nor their smiles,
Wan as primroses gather'd at midnight
By chilly-finger'd spring. Unhappy wight!
"Endymion!" said Peona, "we are here!
What wouldst thou ere we all are laid on bier?"
Then he embraced her, and his lady's hand
Press'd, saying: "Sister, I would have command,
If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate."
At which that dark-eyed stranger stood elate
And said, in a new voice, but sweet as love,
To Endymion's amaze: "By Cupid's dove,
And so thou shalt! and by the lily truth
Of my own breast thou shalt, beloved youth!"
And as she spake, into her face there came
Light, as reflected from a silver flame:
Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in display
Full golden; in her eyes a brighter day

Dawn'd blue, and full of love. Aye, he beheld
Phœbe, his passion ! joyous she upheld
Her lucid bow, continuing thus : " Drear, drear
Has our delaying been ; but foolish fear
Withheld me first ; and then decrees of fate ;
And then 'twas fit that from this mortal state
Thou shouldst, my love, by some unlook'd-for
change

Be spiritualized. Peona, we shall range
These forests, and to thee they safe shall be
As was thy cradle ; hither shalt thou flee
To meet us many a time." Next Cynthia bright
Peona kiss'd, and bless'd with fair good night :
Her brother kiss'd her too, and knelt adown
Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon.
She gave her fair hands to him, and behold,
Before three swiftest kisses he had told,
They vanished far away ! — Peona went
Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment.

L A M I A .

PART I.

UPON a time, before the faery broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous
woods,
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslipp'd
lawns,
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft :
From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight
Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt ;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons pour'd
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,
And in those meads where sometimes she might
haunt,
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose.
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet !
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burn'd from his winged heels to either ear,
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair,
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.
From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,

Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
 And wound with many a river to its head,
 To find where this sweet nymph prepared her
 secret bed :

In vain ; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,
 And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
 Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
 Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
 There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,
 Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys
 All pain but pity : thus the lone voice spake :
 “ When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake !
 When move in a sweet body fit for life,
 And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife
 Of hearts and lips ! Ah, miserable me ! ”
 The God, dove-footed, glided silently
 Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,
 The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
 Until he found a palpitating snake,
 Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
 Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue ;
 Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
 Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd ;
 And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
 Dissolved, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
 Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries —
 So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
 She seem'd at once, some penanced lady elf,
 Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.
 Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
 Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar :
 Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet !
 She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete :

And for her eyes — what could such eyes do there
 But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair ?

As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air.
 Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
 Came, as through bubbling honey, for Love's sake,
 And thus ; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
 Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey :

“ Fair Hermes ! crown'd with feathers, fluttering
 light,

I had a splendid-dream of thee last night :
 I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold,
 Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
 The only sad one ; for thou didst not hear
 The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chanting clear,
 Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
 Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious
 moan.

I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,
 Break amorous through the clouds, as morning
 breaks,

And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
 Strike for the Cretan isle ; and here thou art !
 Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the maid ? ”
 Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
 His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired :
 “ Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high-inspired !
 Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy eyes,
 Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,
 Telling me only where my nymph is fled, —
 Where she doth breathe ! ” “ Bright planet, thou
 hast said,”

Return'd the snake, “ but seal with oaths, fair God ! ”
 “ I swear,” said Hermes, “ by my serpent rod,
 And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown ! ”
 Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms
 blown.

Then thus again the brilliance feminine :
 “ Too frail of heart ! for this lost nymph of thine,
 Free as the air, invisibly, she strays

About these thornless wilds ; her pleasant days
 She tastes unseen ; unseen her nimble feet
 Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet :
 From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches green,
 She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen :
 And by my power is her beauty veil'd
 To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd
 By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,
 Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.
 Pale grew her immortality, for woe
 Of all these lovers, and she grieved so
 I took compassion on her, bade her steep
 Her hair in weird syrups, that would keep
 Her loveliness invisible, yet free
 To wander as she loves, in liberty.
 Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone,
 If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon !”
 Then, once again, the charmed God began
 An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran
 Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.
 Ravish'd she lifted her Circean head,
 Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lipping said,
 “ I was a woman, let me have once more
 A woman's shape, and charming as before.
 I love a youth of Corinth — O the bliss !
 Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is.
 Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,
 And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now.”
 The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
 She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was seen
 Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the
 green.

It was no dream ; or say a dream it was,
 Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
 Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
 One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it might seem
 Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd ;
 Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd

To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,
 Delicate, put to proof the lithe Caducean charm.
 So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent
 Full of adoring tears and blandishment,
 And towards her stept : she, like a moon in wane,
 Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain
 Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
 That faints into itself at evening hour :
 But the God fostering her chilled hand,
 She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland,
 And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,
 Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.
 Into the green-recessed woods they flew ;
 Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

Left to herself, the serpent now began
 To changè ; her elfin blood in madness ran,
 Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,
 Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent ;
 Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear,
 Hot, glazed, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,
 Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one
 cooling tear.
 The colours all inflamed throughout her train,
 She writhed about, convulsed with scarlet pain :
 A deep volcanian yellow took the place
 Of all her milder-mooned body's grace ;
 And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
 Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede :
 Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,
 Eclipsed her crescents, and lick'd up her stars :
 So that, in moments few, she was undrest
 Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
 And rubious-argent : of all these bereft,
 Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
 Still shone her crown ; that vanish'd, also she
 Melted and disappear'd as suddenly ;
 And in the air, her new voice luting soft,

Cried, "Lycius! gentle Lycius!" — borne aloft
 With the bright mists about the mountains hoar
 These words dissolved: Crete's forests heard no
 more.

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
 A full-born beauty new and exquisite?
 She fled into that valley they pass o'er
 Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore;
 And rested at the foot of those wild hills,
 The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,
 And of that other ridge whose barren back
 Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,
 South-westward to Cleone. There she stood
 About a young bird's flutter from a wood,
 Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
 By a clear pool, wherein she passioned
 To see herself escaped from so sore ills,
 While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius! — for she was a maid
 More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
 Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flower'd lea
 Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy:
 A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
 Of love deep learned to the red heart's core:
 Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
 To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain;
 Define their pettish limits, and estrange
 Their points of contact, and swift counterchange;
 Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart
 Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art;
 As though in Cupid's college she had spent
 Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,
 And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so fairly
 By the wayside to linger, we shall see;

But first 'tis fit to tell how she could muse
 And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,
 Of all she list, strange or magnificent :
 How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went ;
 Whether to faint Elysium, or where
 Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair
 Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair ;
 Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,
 Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine ;
 Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine
 Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.
 And sometimes into cities she would send
 Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend ;
 And once, while among mortals dreaming thus,
 She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
 Charioting foremost in the envious race,
 Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,
 And fell into a swooning love of him.
 Now on the moth-time of that evening dim
 He would return that way, as well she knew,
 To Corinth from the shore ; for freshly blew
 The eastern soft wind, and his galley now
 Grated the quay-stones with her brazen prow
 In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle
 Fresh anchor'd ; whither he had been awhile
 To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there
 Waits with high marble doors for blood and in-
 cense rare.

Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire ;
 For by some freakful chance he made retire
 From his companions, and set forth to walk,
 Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk :
 Over the solitary hills he fared,
 Thoughtless, at first, but ere eve's star appear'd
 His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,
 In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.
 Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near —
 Close to her passing, in indifference drear,

His silent sandals swept the mossy green ;
 So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen
 She stood : he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,
 His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes
 Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white
 Turn'd — syllabing thus, “ Ah, Lycius bright !
 And will you leave me on the hills alone ?
 Lycius, look back ! and be some pity shown.”
 He did ; not with cold wonder fearingly,
 But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice ;
 For so delicious were the words she sung,
 It seem'd he had loved them a whole summer long :
 And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
 Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
 And still the cup was full, — while he, afraid
 Lest she should vanish ere his lips had paid
 Due adoration, thus began to adore ;
 Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so
 sure :

“ Leave thee alone ! Look back ! Ah, Goddess, see
 Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee !
 For pity do not this sad heart belie —
 Even as thou vanishest so I shall die.
 Stay ! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay !
 To thy far wishes will thy streams obey :
 Stay ! though the greenest woods be thy domain,
 Alone they can drink up the morning rain :
 Though a descended Pleiad, will not one
 Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
 Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine ?
 So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine
 Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst
 fade,

Thy memory will waste me to a shade : —
 For pity do not melt ! ” — “ If I should stay,”
 Said Lamia, “ here, upon this floor of clay,
 And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,
 What canst thou say or do of charm enough

To dull the nice remembrance of my home ?
 Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam
 Over these hills and vales, where no joy is, —
 Empty of immortality and bliss !
 Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
 That finer spirits cannot breathe below
 In human climes, and live : Alas ! poor youth,
 What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
 My essence ? What serener palaces,
 Where I may all my many senses please,
 And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts ap-
 pease ;

It cannot be — Adieu !” So said, she rose
 Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose
 The amorous promise of her lone complain,
 Swoon'd murmuring of love, and pale with pain.
 The cruel lady, without any show
 Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
 But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
 With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
 Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
 The life she had so tangled in her mesh :
 And as he from one trance was wakening
 Into another, she began to sing,
 Happy in beauty, life, and love, and everything,
 A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
 While, like held breath, the stars drew in their
 panting fires.

And then she whisper'd in such trembling tone,
 As those who, safe together met alone
 For the first time through many anguish'd days,
 Use other speech than looks ; bidding him raise
 His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt,
 For that she was a woman, and without
 Any more subtle fluid in her veins
 Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains
 Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
 And next she wonder'd how his eyes could miss

Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,
 She dwelt but half retired, and there had led
 Days happy as the gold coin could invent
 Without the aid of love; yet in content
 Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by,
 Where 'gainst a column he leant thoughtfully
 At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd
 Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd
 Late on that eve, as 'twas the night before
 The Adonian feast; whereof she saw no more,
 But wept alone those days, for why should she
 adore?

Lycius from death awoke into amaze,
 To see her still, and singing so sweet lays;
 Then from amaze into delight he fell
 To hear her whisper woman's lore so well;
 And every word she spake enticed him on
 To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.
 Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
 Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
 There is not such a treat among them all,
 Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
 As a real woman, lineal indeed
 From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.
 Thus gentle Lamia judged, and judged aright,
 That Lycius could not love in half a fright,
 So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
 More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
 With no more awe than what her beauty gave,
 That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.
 Lycius to all made eloquent reply,
 Marrying to every word a twin-born sigh;
 And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,
 If 'twas too far that night for her soft feet.
 The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
 Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease
 To a few paces; not at all surmised
 By blinded Lycius, so in her comprised

They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,
So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all,
Throughout her palaces imperial,
And all her populous streets and temples lewd,
Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,
To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.
Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours,
Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,
Companion'd or alone; while many a light
Flared, here and there, from wealthy festivals,
And threw their moving shadows on the walls,
Or found them cluster'd in the corniced shade
Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,
Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near
With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth
bald crown,
Slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic gown:
Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,
Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,
While hurried Lamia trembled: "Ah," said he,
"Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?
Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew?" —
"I'm wearied," said fair Lamia: "tell me who
Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind
His features: — Lycius! wherefore did you blind
Yourself from his quick eyes?" Lycius replied,
"'Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide
And good instructor; but to-night he seems
The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams."

While yet he spake they had arrived before
A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
Where hung a silver lamp whose phosphor glow
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,

Mild as a star in water; for so new
 And so unsullied was the marble hue,
 So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
 Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine
 Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds Æolian
 Breathed from the hinges, as the ample span
 Of the wide doors disclosed a place unknown
 Some time to any, but those two alone,
 And a few Persian mutes, who that same year
 Were seen about the markets: none knew where
 They could inhabit; the most curious
 Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to their
 house:

And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,
 For truth's sake what woe afterwards befell,
 'Twould humour many a heart to leave them thus,
 Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.



PART II.

LOVE in a hut, with water and a crust,
 Is — Love, forgive us! — cinders, ashes, dust;
 Love in a palace is perhaps at last
 More grievous torment than a hermit's fast: —
 That is a doubtful tale from faery land,
 Hard for the non-elect to understand.
 Had Lycius lived to hand his story down,
 He might have given the moral a fresh frown,
 Or clench'd it quite: but too short was their bliss
 To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft
 voice hiss.

Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
 Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
 Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,
 Above the lintel of their chamber door,
 And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor.

For all this came a ruin : side by side
 They were enthroned, in the even tide,
 Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
 Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
 Floated into the room, and let appear
 Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,
 Betwixt two marble shafts : — there they reposed,
 Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,
 Saving a tithe which love still open kept,
 That they might see each other while they almost
 slept ;

When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
 Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill
 Of trumpets — Lycius started — the sounds fled,
 But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.
 For the first time, since first he harbour'd in
 That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
 His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn
 Into the noisy world almost forsworn.
 The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
 Saw this with pain, so arguing a want
 Of something more, more than her empery
 Of joys ; and she began to moan and sigh
 Because he mused beyond her, knowing well
 That but a moment's thought is passion's passing
 bell.

“ Why do you sigh, fair creature ? ” whisper'd he :
 “ Why, do you think ? ” return'd she tenderly :
 “ You have deserted me ; where am I now ?
 Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow :
 No, no, you have dismiss'd me ; and I go
 From your breast houseless : ay, it must be so.”
 He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,
 Where he was mirror'd small in paradise, —
 “ My silver planet, both of eve and morn !
 Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
 While I am striving how to fill my heart
 With deeper crimson, and a double smart ?

How to entangle, trammel up and snare
 Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there,
 Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose ?
 Ay, a sweet kiss — you see your mighty woes.
 My thoughts ! shall I unveil them ? Listen then !
 What mortal hath a prize, that other men
 May be confounded and abash'd withal,
 But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,
 And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice
 Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.
 Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,
 While through the thronged streets your bridal car
 Wheels round its dazzling spokes." — The lady's
 cheek

Trembled ; she nothing said, but, pale and meek,
 Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
 Of sorrows at his words ; at last with pain
 Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,
 To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,
 Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim
 Her wild and timid nature to his aim ;
 Besides, for all his love, in self despite,
 Against his better self, he took delight
 Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
 His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue
 Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible
 In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.
 Fine was the mitigated fury, like
 Apollo's presence when in act to strike
 The serpent — Ha ! the serpent ! certes, she
 Was none. She burnt, she loved the tyranny,
 And, all subdued, consented to the hour
 When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.
 Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,
 " Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my
 truth,
 I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee
 Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,

As still I do. Hast any mortal name,
 Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?
 Or friends or kinsfolk on the citted earth,
 To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth?"
 "I have no friends," said Lamia, "no, not one;
 My presence in wide Corinth hardly known:
 My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
 Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns,
 Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,
 And I neglect the holy rite for thee.
 Even as you list invite your many guests;
 But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
 With any pleasure on me, do not bid
 Old Apollonius — from him keep me hid."
 Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,
 Made close inquiry; from whose touch she shrank,
 Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade
 Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd.

It was the custom then to bring away
 The bride from home at blushing shut of day,
 Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along
 By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song,
 With other pageants: but this fair unknown
 Had not a friend. So being left alone,
 (Lycius was gone to summon all his kin,)
 And knowing surely she could never win
 His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,
 She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress
 The misery in fit magnificence.
 She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and whence
 Came, and who were her subtle servitors.
 About the halls, and to and from the doors,
 There was a noise of wings, till in short space
 The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched
 grace.
 A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
 Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan

Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.
 Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade
 Of palm and plantain, met from either side,
 High in the midst, in honour of the bride :
 Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,
 From either side their stems branch'd one to one
 All down the aisled place ; and beneath all
 There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall
 to wall.

So canopied, lay an untasted feast
 Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,
 Silently paced about, and as she went,
 In pale contented sort of discontent,
 Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
 The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.
 Between the tree-stems marbled plain at first,
 Came jasper panels ; then, anon, there burst
 Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees,
 And with the larger wove in small intricacies.
 Approving all, she faded at self-will,
 And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd and still,
 Complete and ready for the revels rude,
 When dreadful guests would come to spoil her soli-
 tude.

The day appear'd, and all the gossip rout.
 O senseless Lycius ! Madman ! wherefore flout
 The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd hours,
 And show to common eyes these secret bowers ?
 The herd approach'd ; each guest, with busy brain,
 Arriving at the portal, gazed amain,
 And enter'd marvelling : for they knew the street,
 Remember'd it from childhood all complete
 Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen
 That royal porch, that high-built fair demesne ;
 So in they hurried all, mazed, curious and keen :
 Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,
 And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere ;

'Twas Apollonius : something too he laugh'd,
As though some knotty problem, that had daft
His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,
And solve and melt : — 'twas just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule
His young disciple. " 'Tis no common rule,
Lycius," said he, " for uninvited guest
To force himself upon you, and infest
With an unbidden presence the bright throng
Of younger friends ; yet must I do this wrong,
And you forgive me." Lycius blush'd and led
The old man through the inner doors broad-spread ;
With reconciling words and courteous mien
Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,
Fill'd with pervading brilliance and perfume :
Before each lucid panel fuming stood
A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerved upon the soft
Wool-woofed carpets : fifty wreaths of smoke
From fifty censers their light voyage took
To the high roof, still mimick'd as they rose
Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds odorous.
Twelve-sphered tables by silk seats insphered,
High as the level of a man's breast rear'd
On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told
Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine
Came from the gloomy tun with merry shine.
Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
Each shrining in the midst the image of a God.

When in an antechamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press'd,
By ministering slaves, upon his hands and feet,

And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
 Pour'd on his hair, they all moved to the feast
 In white robes, and themselves in order placed
 Around the silken couches, wondering
 Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth
 could spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
 While fluent Greek a vowel'd under-song
 Kept up among the guests, discoursing low
 At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow ;
 But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains,
 Louder they talk, and louder come the strains
 Of powerful instruments : — the gorgeous dyes,
 The space, the splendour of the draperies,
 The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
 Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
 Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,
 And every soul from human trammels freed,
 No more so strange ; for merry wine, sweet wine,
 Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too divine.
 Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height ;
 Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double
 bright :

Garlands of every green, and every scent
 From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees branch-rent,
 In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought
 High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought
 Of every guest : that each, as he did please,
 Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease.

What wreath for Lamia ? What for Lycius ?
 What for the sage, old Apollonius ?
 Upon her aching forehead be there hung
 The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue ;
 And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him
 The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim
 Into forgetfulness ; and, for the sage,

Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage
 War on his temples. Do not all charms fly
 At the mere touch of cold philosophy ?
 There was an awful rainbow once in heaven :
 We know her woof, her texture ; she is given
 In the dull catalogue of common things.
 Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
 Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
 Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine —
 Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
 The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
 Scarce saw in all the room another face,
 Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took
 Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a look
 'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
 From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,
 And pledge him. The bald-head philosopher
 Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or a stir,
 Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,
 Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling her sweet
 pride.

Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,
 As pale it lay upon the rosy couch :
 'Twas icy, and the cold ran through his veins ;
 Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains
 Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.
 " Lamia, what means this ? Wherefore dost thou
 start ?
 Know'st thou that man ?" Poor Lamia answer'd
 not.

He gazed into her eyes, and not a jot
 Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal :
 More, more he gazed : his human senses reel :
 Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs :
 There was no recognition in those orbs.
 " Lamia !" he cried — and no soft-toned reply.

The many heard, and the loud revelry
Grew hush : the stately music no more breathes ;
The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.
By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased ;
A deadly silence step by step increased,
Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,
And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.
“ Lamia ! ” he shriek'd ; and nothing but the shriek
With its sad echo did the silence break.
“ Begone, foul dream ! ” he cried, gazing again
In the bride's face, where now no azure vein
Wander'd on fair-spaced temples ; no soft bloom
Misted the cheek ; no passion to illumine
The deep-recessed vision : — all was blight ;
Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.
“ Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man !
Turn them aside, wretch ! or the righteous ban
Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images
Here represent their shadowy presences,
May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn
Of painful blindness ; leaving thee forlorn,
In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
Of conscience, for their long-offended might,
For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries,
Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.
Corinthians ! look upon that gray-beard wretch !
Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch
Around his demon eyes ! Corinthians, see !
My sweet bride withers at their potency.”
“ Fool ! ” said the sophist, in an under-tone
Gruff with contempt ; which a death-nighing moan
From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,
He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
“ Fool ! Fool ! ” repeated he, while his eyes still
Relented not, nor moved ; “ from every ill
Of life have I preserved thee to this day,
And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey ? ”
Then Lamia breathed death-breath ; the sophist's eye,

Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
 Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging : she, as well
 As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
 Motion'd him to be silent ; vainly so,
 He look'd and look'd again a level — No !
 “ A serpent ! ” echoed he ; no sooner said,
 Than with a frightful scream she vanished :
 And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
 As were his limbs of life, from that same night.
 On the high couch he lay ! — his friends came
 round —
 Supported him — no pulse or breath they found,
 And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.*

* “ Philostratus, in his fourth book, *de Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that, going betwixt Cenchreas and Corinth, met such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which, taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was a Phœnician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him ; but she, being fair and lovely, would die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried with her awhile to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came Apollonius ; who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia ; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no substance, but mere illusions. When she saw herself descried, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant ; many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece.” — BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part 3, Sect. 2, Memb. I. Subs. I.

ISABELLA, OR THE POT OF BASIL ;

A STORY, FROM BOCCACCIO.



I.

FAIR ISABEL, poor simple Isabel !
Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye !
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell
Without some stir of heart, some malady ;
They could not sit at meals but feel how well
It soothed each to be the other by ;
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep,
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

II.

With every morn their love grew tenderer,
With every eve deeper and tenderer still ;
He might not in house, field, or garden stir,
But her full shape would all his seeing fill ;
And his continual voice was pleasanter
To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill ;
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

III.

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch,
Before the door had given her to his eyes ;
And from her chamber-window he would catch
Her beauty farther than the falcon spies ;

And constant as her vespers would he watch,
 Because her face was turn'd to the same skies ;
 And with sick longing all the night outwear,
 To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

IV.

A whole long month of May in this sad plight
 Made their cheeks paler by the break of June :
 " To-morrow will I bow to my delight,
 To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon." —
 " O may I never see another night,
 Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune." —
 So spake they to their pillows ; but, alas,
 Honeyless days and days did he let pass ;

V.

Until sweet Isabella's untouch'd cheek
 Fell sick within the rose's just domain,
 Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek
 By every lull to cool her infant's pain :
 " How ill she is !" said he, " I may not speak,
 And yet I will, and tell my love all plain :
 If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,
 And at the least 'twill startle off her cares."

VI.

So said he one fair morning, and all day
 His heart beat awfully against his side ;
 And to his heart he inwardly did pray
 For power to speak ; but still the ruddy tide
 Stifled his voice, and pulsed resolve away —
 Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,
 Yet brought him to the meekness of a child :
 Alas ! when passion is both meek and wild !

VII.

So once more he had waked and anguished
 A dreary night of love and misery,
 If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
 To every symbol on his forehead high ;
 She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
 And straight all flush'd ; so, lisp'd tenderly,
 " Lorenzo ! " — here she ceased her timid quest,
 But in her tone and look he read the rest.

VIII.

" O Isabella ! I can half perceive
 That I may speak my grief into thine ear ;
 If thou didst ever anything believe,
 Believe how I love thee, believe how near
 My soul is to its doom : I would not grieve
 Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear
 Thine eyes by gazing ; but I cannot live
 Another night, and not my passion thrive.

IX.

" Love ! thou art leading me from wintry cold,
 Lady ! thou leadest me to summer clime,
 And I must taste the blossoms that unfold
 In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time."
 So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
 And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme :
 Great bliss was with them, and great happiness
 Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

X.

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
 Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart
 Only to meet again more close, and share

The inward fragrance of each other's heart.
 She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair
 Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart;
 He with light steps went up a western hill,
 And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill.

XI.

All close they met again, before the dusk
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
 All close they met, all eyes, before the dusk
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
 Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,
 Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.
 Ah! better had it been for ever so,
 Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

XII.

Were they unhappy then? — It cannot be —
 Too many tears for lovers have been shed,
 Too many sighs give we to them in fee,
 Too much of pity after they are dead,
 Too many doleful stories do we see,
 Whose matter in bright gold were best be read;
 Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse
 Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

XIII.

But, for the general award of love,
 The little sweet doth kill much bitterness;
 Though Dido silent is in under-grove,
 And Isabella's was a great distress,
 Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove
 Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less —
 Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,
 Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

XIV.

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,
 Enriched from ancestral merchandise,
 And for them many a weary hand did swelt
 In torched mines and noisy factories,
 And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt
 In blood from stinging whip; with hollow eyes
 Many all day in dazzling river stood,
 To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

XV.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
 And went all naked to the hungry shark;
 For them his ears gush'd blood; for them in death
 The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark
 Lay full of darts; for them alone did seethe
 A thousand men in troubles wide and dark:
 Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
 That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

XVI.

Why were they proud? Because their marble founts
 Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears?
 Why were they proud? Because fair orange-mounts
 Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs?
 Why were they proud? Because red-lined accounts
 Were richer than the songs of Grecian years?
 Why were they proud? again we ask aloud,
 Why in the name of Glory were they proud?

XVII.

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired
 In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,
 As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,

Paled in and vineyarded from beggar-spies ;
 The hawks of ship-mast forests — the untired
 And pannier'd mules for ducats and old lies —
 Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away, —
 Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

XVIII.

How was it these same ledger-men could spy
 Fair Isabella in her downy nest ?
 How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye
 A straying from his toil ? Hot Egypt's pest
 Into their vision covetous and sly !
 How could these money-bags see east and west ?
 Yet so they did — and every dealer fair
 Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

XIX.

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio !
 Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,
 And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,
 And of thy roses amorous of the moon,
 And of thy lilies, that do paler grow
 Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune,
 For venturing syllables that ill beseem
 The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

XX.

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale
 Shall move on soberly, as it is meet ;
 There is no other crime, no mad assail
 To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet :
 But it is done — succeed the verse or fail —
 To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet ;
 To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,
 An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

XXI.

These brethren having found by many signs
 What love Lorenzo for their sister had,
 And how she loved him too, each unconfines
 His bitter thoughts to other, well nigh mad
 That he, the servant of their trade designs,
 Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,
 When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees
 To some high noble and his olive-trees.

XXII.

And many a jealous conference had they,
 And many times they bit their lips alone,
 Before they fix'd upon a surest way
 To make the youngster for his crime atone ;
 And at the last, these men of cruel clay
 Cut mercy with a sharp knife to the bone ;
For they resolved in some forest dim
 To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

XXIII.

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant
 Into the sun-rise, o'er the balustrade
 Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent
 Their footing through the dews ; and to him said,
 " You seem there in the quiet of content,
 Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade
 Calm speculation ; but if you are wise,
 Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

XXIV.

" To-day we purpose, ay, this hour we mount
 To spur three leagues towards the Appenine ;

Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count
 His dewy rosary on the eglantine."
 Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,
 Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents' whine ;
 And went in haste, to get in readiness,
 With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman's dress.

XXV.

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,
 Each third step did he pause, and listen'd oft
 If he could hear his lady's matin-song,
 Or the light whisper of her footstep soft ;
 And as he thus over his passion hung,
 He heard a laugh full musical aloft ;
 When, looking up, he saw her features bright
 Smile through an in-door lattice all delight.

XXVI.

"Love, Isabel!" said he, "I was in pain
 Lest I should miss to bid thee a good morrow :
 Ah! what if I should lose thee, when so fain
 I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow
 Of a poor three hours' absence? but we'll gain
 Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.
 Good bye! I'll soon be back." — "Good bye!" said
 she
 And as he went she chanted merrily.

XXVII.

So the two brothers and their murder'd man
 Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream
 Gurgles through straighten'd banks, and still doth
 fan
 Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream
 Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan

The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,
Lorenzo's flush with love. They pass'd the water
Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

XXVIII.

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,
There in that forest did his great love cease ;
Ah! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,
It aches in loneliness — is ill at peace
As the break-covert bloodhounds of such sin :
They dipp'd their swords in the water, and did
tease
Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,
Each richer by his being a murderer.

XXIX.

They told their sister how, with sudden speed,
Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,
Because of some great urgency and need
In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.
Poor girl! put on thy stifling widow's weed,
And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands ;
To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,
And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

XXX.

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be ;
Sorely she wept until the night came on,
And then, instead of love, O misery!
She brooded o'er the luxury alone :
His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,
And to the silence made a gentle moan,
Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,
And on her couch low murmuring, "Where? O
where?"

XXXI.

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long
 Its fiery vigil in her single breast ;
 She fretted for the golden hour, and hung
 Upon the time with feverish unrest —
 Not long ; for soon into her heart a throng
 Of higher occupants, a richer zest,
 Came tragic ; passion not to be subdued,
 And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

XXXII.

In the mid days of autumn, on their eyes
 The breath of Winter comes from far away,
 And the sick west continually bereaves
 Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay
 Of death among the bushes and the leaves,
 To make all bare before he dares to stray
 From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel
 By gradual decay from beauty fell,

XXXIII.

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes
 She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all pale,
 Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes
 Could keep him off so long ? They spake a tale
 Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes
 Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale ;
 And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud,
 To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

XXXIV.

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,
 But for a thing more deadly dark than all ;

It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,
 Which saves a sick man from the feather'd pall
 For some few gasping moments; like a lance,
 Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall
 With cruel pierce, and bringing him again
 Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

XXXV.

It was a vision. In the drowsy gloom,
 The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
 Lorenzo stood, and wept: the forest tomb
 Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could
 shoot
 Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom
 Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
 From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears
 Had made a miry channel for his tears.

XXXVI.

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake;
 For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,
 To speak as when on earth it was awake,
 And Isabella on its music hung:
 Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,
 As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung;
 And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,
 Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

XXXVII.

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright
 With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof
 From the poor girl by magic of their light,
 The while it did unthread the horrid woof
 Of the late darken'd time — the murderous spite
 Of pride and avarice — the dark pine roof

In the forest — and the sodden turfed dell,
Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.

XXXVIII.

Saying moreover, “ Isabel, my sweet !
Red whortleberries droop above my head,
And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet ;
Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed
Their leaves and prickly nuts ; a sheepfold bleat
Comes from beyond the river to my bed :
Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

XXXIX.

“ I am a shadow now, alas ! alas !
Upon the skirts of human nature dwelling
Alone : I chant alone the holy mass,
While little sounds of life are round me knell-
ing,
And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,
And many a chapel bell the hour is telling,
Paining me through : those sounds grow strange to
me,
And thou art distant in Humanity.

XL.

“ I know what was, I feel full well what is,
And I should rage, if spirits could go mad ;
Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,
That paleness warms my grave, as though I
had
A seraph chosen from the bright abyss
To be my spouse : thy paleness makes me glad :
Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel
A greater love through all my essence steal.”

XLI.

The Spirit mourn'd "Adieu!" — dissolved and left
 The atom darkness in a slow turmoil;
 As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,
 Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,
 We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,
 And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil:
 It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,
 And in the dawn she started up awake;

XLII.

"Ha! ha!" said she, "I knew not this hard life,
 I thought the worst was simple misery;
 I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife
 Portion'd us — happy days, or else to die;
 But there is crime — a brother's bloody knife!
 Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy:
 I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,
 And greet thee morn and even in the skies."

XLIII.

When the full morning came, she had devised
 How she might secret to the forest hie;
 How she might find the clay, so dearly prized,
 And sing to it one latest lullaby;
 How her short absence might be unsurmised,
 While she the inmost of the dream would try.
 Resolved, she took with her an aged nurse,
 And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

XLIV.

See, as they creep along the river side,
 How she doth whisper to that aged dame,

And, after looking round the champaign wide,
 Shows her a knife. — “What feverous hectic
 flame
 Burns in thee, child? — what good can thee betide
 That thou shouldst smile again?” The evening
 came,
 And they had found Lorenzo’s earthy bed;
 The flint was there, the berries at his head.

XLV.

Who hath not loiter’d in a green churchyard,
 And let his spirit, like a demon mole,
 Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,
 To see skull, coffin’d bones, and funeral stole;
 Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr’d,
 And filling it once more with human soul?
 Ah! this is holiday to what was felt
 When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt.

XLVI.

She gazed into the fresh-thrown mould, as though
 One glance did fully all its secrets tell;
 Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know
 Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well;
 Upon the murderous spot she seem’d to grow,
 Like to a native lily of the dell:
 Then with her knife, all sudden she began
 To dig more fervently than misers can.

XLVII.

Soon she turn’d up a soiled glove, whereon
 Her silk had play’d in purple phantasies;
 She kiss’d it with a lip more chill than stone,
 And put it in her bosom, where it dries
 And freezes utterly unto the bone

Those dainties made to still an infant's cries :
 Then 'gan she work again ; nor stay'd her care,
 But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

XLVIII.

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,
 Until her heart felt pity to the core
 At sight of such a dismal labouring,
 And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar,
 And put her lean hands to the horrid thing :
 Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore ;
 At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
 And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

XLIX.

Ah ! wherefore all this wormy circumstance ?
 Why linger at the yawning tomb so long ?
 O for the gentleness of old Romance,
 The simple plaining of a minstrel's song !
 Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,
 For here, in truth, it doth not well belong
 To speak : — O turn thee to the very tale,
 And taste the music of that vision pale.

L.

With duller steel than the Perséan sword
 They cut away no formless monster's head,
 But one, whose gentleness did well accord
 With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,
 Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord :
 If Love impersonate was ever dead,
 Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.
 'Twas love ; cold, — dead indeed, but not dethron'd.

LI.

In anxious secrecy they took it home,
 And then the prize was all for Isabel:
 She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,
 And all around each eye's sepulchral cell
 Pointed each fringed lash; the smeared loam
 With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,
 She drench'd away: and still she comb'd and kept
 Sighing all day — and still she kiss'd and wept.

LII.

Then in a silken scarf, — sweet with the dews
 Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,
 And divine liquids come with odorous ooze
 Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully, —
 She wrapp'd it up; and for its tomb did choose
 A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,
 And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set
 Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

LIII.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
 And she forgot the blue above the trees,
 And she forgot the dells where waters run,
 And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze;
 She had no knowledge when the day was done,
 And the new morn she saw not: but in peace
 Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
 And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

LIV.

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,
 Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,

So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
 Of Basil-tufts in Florence ; for it drew
 Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,
 From the fast mouldering head there shut from
 view :
 So that the jewel, safely casketed,
 Came forth, and in perfumed leaflets spread.

L V.

O Melancholy, linger here awhile !
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
 O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,
 Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us — O sigh !
 Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile ;
 Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,
 And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,
 Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs.

LVI.

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,
 From the deep throat of sad Melpomene !
 Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,
 And touch the strings into a mystery ;
 Sound mournfully upon the winds and low ;
 For simple Isabel is soon to be
 Among the dead : She withers, like a palm
 Cut by an Indian for his juicy balm.

LVII.

O leave the palm to wither by itself ;
 Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour ! —
 It may not be — those Baalites of pelf,
 Her brethren, noted the continual shower
 From her dead eyes ; and many a curious elf,
 Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower

Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside
By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

LVIII.

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd much
Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,
And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch ;
Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might
mean :
They could not surely give belief, that such
A very nothing would have power to wean
Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,
And even remembrance of her love's delay.

LIX.

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift
This hidden whim ; and long they watch'd in vain ;
For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,
And seldom felt she any hunger-pain :
And when she left, she hurried back, as swift
As bird on wing to breast its eggs again :
And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there
Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

LX.

Yet they contrived to steal the Basil-pot,
And to examine it in secret place :
The thing was vile with green and livid spot,
And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face :
The guerdon of their murder they had got,
And so left Florence in a moment's space,
Never to turn again. — Away they went,
With blood upon their heads, to banishment.

LXI.

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away !
 O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
 O Echo, Echo, on some other day,
 From isles Lethean, sigh to us — O sigh !
 Spirits of grief, sing not your “ Well-a-way ! ”
 For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die ;
 Will die a death too lone and incomplete,
 Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

LXII.

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,
 Asking for her lost Basil amorously :
 And with melodious chuckle in the strings
 Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry
 After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,
 To ask him where her Basil was ; and why
 'Twas hid from her : “ For cruel 'tis,” said she,
 “ To steal my Basil-pot away from me.”

LXIII.

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,
 Imploring for her Basil to the last.
 No heart was there in Florence but did mourn
 In pity of her love, so overcast.
 And a sad ditty of this story borne
 From mouth to mouth through all the country
 pass'd :
 Still is the burthen sung — “ O cruelty,
 To steal my Basil-pot away from me ! ”

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.



I.

ST. AGNES' EVE — Ah, bitter chill it was!
S The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen
grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb wère the Beadsman's fingers while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he
saith.

II.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;
But no — already had his death-bell rung;

The joys of all his life were said and sung :
 His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve :
 Another way he went, and soon among
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
 And all night kept awake, for sinner's sake to grieve.

IV.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;
 And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :
 The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
 Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on
 their breasts.

V.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
 Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
 The brain, new-stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs
 gay
 Of old romance. These let us wish away,
 And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
 Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
 On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
 As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
 Young virgins might have visions of delight,
 And soft adorings from their loves receive
 Upon the honey'd middle of the night,

If ceremonies due they did aright ;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white ;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline :
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by — she heeded not at all : in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired ; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not : her heart was elsewhere ;
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the
year.

VIII.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short :
The hallow'd hour was near at hand : she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport ;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy ; all amorn,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,

But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen ;
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss — in sooth such
 things have been.

X.

He ventures in : let no huzz'd whisper tell :
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's feverous citadel :
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage : not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI.

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland :
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this
 place ;
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty
 race !

XII.

"Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hilde-
 brand ;
 He had a fever late, and in the fit
 He cursed thee and thine, both house and land :
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
 More tame for his gray hairs — Alas me ! flit !

Flit like a ghost away." — "Ah, Gossip dear,
 We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
 And tell me how" — "Good Saints! not here,
 not here;
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy
 bier."

XIII.

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume;
 And as she mutter'd "Well-a — well-a-day!"
 He found him in a little moonlight room,
 Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
 "Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
 "O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
 Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
 When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

XIV.

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve —
 Yet men will murder upon holy days:
 Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
 To venture so: it fills me with amaze
 To see thee, Porphyro! St. Agnes' Eve!
 God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays
 This very night: good angels her deceive!
 But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

XV.

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
 Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book,
 As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told

His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot : then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :
"A cruel man and impious thou art :
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, Go! I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst
seem."

XVII.

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro : " O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last
prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face :
Good Angela, believe me by these tears ;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than
wolves and bears."

XVIII.

"Ah ! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul ?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, church-yard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll ;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never miss'd." Thus plaining, doth she
bring

A gentler speech from burning Porphyro ;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame :
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night : by the tambour
frame
Her own lute thou wilt see : no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience kneel in
prayer
The while : Ah ! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

XXI.

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd ;
The Dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her ; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,

Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd and chaste ;
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in her
 brain.

XXII.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
 Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware :
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd
 and fled.

XXIII.

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died :
 She closed the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide :
 No utter'd syllable, or, woe betide !
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side ;
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled in her dell.

XXIV.

A casement high and triple arch'd there was,
 All garlanded with carven imageries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,

And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens
and kings.

XXV.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint :
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven : Porphyro grew faint :
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal
taint.

XXVI.

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one ;
Loosens her fragrant bodice ; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees :
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain ;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray ;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII.

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
 And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
 To wake into a sumberous tenderness ;
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
 And breathed himself: then from the closet
 crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness
 And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
 And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo ! — how
 fast she slept.

XXIX.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
 A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet : —
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet !
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone : —
 The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
 In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ;
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
 And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon ;
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
 From Fez ; and spiced dainties, every one,
 From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon,

XXXI.

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathed silver : sumptuous they stand
 In the retired quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light. —
 “And now, my love, my seraph fair awake !
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite :
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth
 ache.”

XXXII.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
 By the dusk curtains : — 'twas a midnight charm
 Impossible to melt as iced stream :
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam ;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies :
 It seem'd he never, never could redeem
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes ;
 So mused awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute, —
 Tumultuous, — and, in chords that tenderest be,
 He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
 In Provence call'd “ La belle dame sans mercy : ”
 Close to her ear touching the melody ; —
 Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan :
 He ceased — she panted quick — and suddenly
 Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone :
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured
 stone.

XXXIV.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep :
 There was a painful change, that night expell'd
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep.
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh ;
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep ;
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dream-
 ingly.

XXXV.

“Ah, Porphyro !” said she, “ but even now
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
 Made tuneable with every sweetest vow ;
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear :
 How changed thou art ! how pallid, chill, and
 drear !
 Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !
 Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to
 go.”

XXXVI.

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
 Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
 Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose ;
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose
 Blendeth its odour with the violet, —
 Solution sweet : meantime the frost-wind blows
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
 Against the window-panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath
 set.

XXXVII.

'Tis dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet :
 " This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline !"
 'Tis dark : the iced gusts still rave and beat :
 " No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !
 Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine. —
 Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ?
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ; —
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

XXXVIII.

" My Madeline ! sweet dreamer ! lovely bride !
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest ?
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil
 dyed ?
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
 After so many hours of toil and quest,
 A famish'd pilgrim, — saved by miracle.
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
 Saving of thy sweet self ; if thou think'st well
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel."

XXXIX.

" Hark ! 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed :
 Arise — arise ! the morning is at hand ; —
 The bloated wassailers will never heed :
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see, —
 Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead :
 Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be,
 For o'er the southern moors I have a home for
 thee."

XL.

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears —
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found,
 In all the house was heard no human sound.
 A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each
 door ;

The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
 Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar ;
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall !
 Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
 With a huge empty flagon by his side :
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns :
 By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide : —
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones ;
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII.

And they are gone : ay, ages long ago
 These lovers fled away into the storm.
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
 And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
 Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
 Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
 Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;
 The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
 For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

HYPERION.



BOOK I.

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair ;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deaden'd more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade : the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unscathed ; and his realmless eyes were closed ;
While his bow'd head seem'd listening to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place ;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
She was a Goddess of the infant world ;

By her in stature the tall Amazon
 Had stood a pigmy's height : she would have ta'en
 Achilles by the hair and bent his neck ;
 Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.
 Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
 Pedestall'd haply in a palace-court,
 When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
 But oh ! how unlike marble was that face :
 How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
 There was a listening fear in her regard,
 As if calamity had but begun ;
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
 Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
 One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
 Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain :
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck
 She laid, and to the level of his ear
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
 In solemn tenour and deep organ tone :
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
 Would come in these like accents ; O how frail
 To that large utterance of the early Gods !
 " Saturn, look up ! — though wherefore, poor old
 King ?

I have no comfort for thee, no not one :
 I cannot say, ' O wherefore sleepest thou ?'
 For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
 Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God ;
 And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
 Has from thy sceptre pass'd ; and all the air
 Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
 Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,
 Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;
 And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands
 Scorches and burns our once serene domain.

O aching time ! O moments big as years !
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,
And press it so upon our weary griefs
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn, sleep on : — O thoughtless, why did I
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ?
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes ?
Saturn, sleep on ! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave :
So came these words and went ; the while in tears
She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,
Just where her falling hair might be outspread
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured motionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern ;
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet :
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess ; and then spake
As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
Shook horrid with such aspen-malady :
" O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face ;
Look up, and let me see our doom in it ;
Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
Is Saturn's ; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
Of Saturn ; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,

Naked and bare of its great diadem,
 Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power
 To make me desolate? whence came the strength?
 How was it nurtured to such bursting forth,
 While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp?
 But it is so; and I am smother'd up,
 And buried from all godlike exercise
 Of influence benign on planets pale,
 Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
 Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
 And all those acts which Deity supreme
 Doth ease its heart of love in. I am gone
 Away from my own bosom: I have left
 My strong identity, my real self,
 Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
 Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!
 Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
 Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light:
 Space region'd with life-air, and barren void;
 Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.
 Search, Thea, search! and tell me if thou seest
 A certain shape or shadow, making way
 With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
 A heaven he lost erewhile: it must — it must
 Be of ripe progress — Saturn must be king.
 Yes, there must be a golden victory;
 There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets
 blown
 Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
 Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
 Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
 Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
 Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
 Of the sky-children; I will give command:
 Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?"

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
 And made his hands to struggle in the air,

His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
 His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
 He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep ;
 A little time, and then again he snatch'd
 Utterance thus : — " But cannot I create ?
 Cannot I form ? Cannot I fashion forth
 Another world, another universe,
 To overbear and crumble this to nought ?
 Where is another chaos ? Where ? " That word
 Found way unto Olympus, and made quake
 The rebel three. Thea was startled up,
 And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
 As thus she quick-voiced spake, yet full of awe.

" This cheers our fallen house : come to our
 friends,
 O Saturn ! come away, and give them heart ;
 I know the covert, for thence came I hither."
 Thus brief ; then with beseeching eyes she went
 With backward footing through the shade a space :
 He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way
 Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
 Which eagles cleave, upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
 More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
 Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe :
 The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
 Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
 And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.
 But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
 His sovereignty, and rule, and majesty ;
 Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
 Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up
 From man to the sun's God, yet unsecure :
 For as among us mortals omens drear
 Fright and perplex, so also shudder'd he,
 Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,

Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp ;
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright,
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
Glared a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush'd angerly : while sometimes eagles' wings,
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
Darken'd the place ; and neighing steeds were
heard,
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick :
And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west,
After the full completion of fair day,
For rest divine upon exalted couch,
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He paced away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall ;
While far within each aisle and deep recess,
His winged minions in close clusters stood,
Amazed and full of fear ; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
When earthquakes jar their battlements and
towers.
Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy trance,
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west ;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothed silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet

And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies ;
 And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
 In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
 That inlet to severe magnificence
 Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath ;
 His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
 And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
 That scared away the meek ethereal Hours
 And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
 From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
 Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
 And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
 Until he reach'd the great main cupola ;
 There standing fierce beneath, he stamp'd his foot,
 And from the basements deep to the high towers
 Jarr'd his own golden region ; and before
 The quavering thunder thereupon had ceased,
 His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
 To this result : " O dreams of day and night !
 O monstrous forms ! O effigies of pain !
 O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom !
 O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools !
 Why do I know ye ? why have I seen ye ? why
 Is my eternal essence thus distraught
 To see and to behold these horrors new ?
 Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall ?
 Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
 This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
 This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
 These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
 Of all my lucent empire ? It is left
 Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.
 The blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry,
 I cannot see — but darkness, death and darkness.
 Even here, into my centre of repose,
 The shady visions come to domineer,

Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp —
 Fall! — No, by Tellus and her briny robes!
 Over the fiery frontier of my realms
 I will advance a terrible right arm
 Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
 And bid old Saturn take his throne again.”
 He spake, and ceased, the while a heavier threat
 Held struggle with his throat, but came not forth ;
 For as in theatres of crowded men
 Hubbub increases more they call out “ Hush ! ”
 So at Hyperion’s words the Phantoms pale
 Bestirr’d themselves, thrice horrible and cold ;
 And from the mirror’d level where he stood
 A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
 At this, through all his bulk an agony
 Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
 Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
 Making slow way, with head and neck convulsed
 From over-strained might. Released, he fled
 To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
 Before the dawn in season due should blush,
 He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy
 portals,
 Clear’d them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
 Suddenly on the ocean’s chilly streams.
 The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
 Each day from east to west the heavens through,
 Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds ;
 Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
 But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
 Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
 Glow’d through, and wrought upon the muffling dark
 Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
 Up to the zenith — hieroglyphics old,
 Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
 Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
 Won from the gaze of many centuries :
 Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge

Of stone, or marble swart ; their import gone,
 Their wisdom long since fled. Two wings this orb
 Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
 Ever exalted at the God's approach :
 And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
 Rose, one by one, till all outspread were ;
 While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipsed,
 Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
 Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne
 And bid the day begin, if but for change.
 He might not : — No, though a primeval God :
 The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
 Therefore the operations of the dawn
 Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told.
 Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
 Eager to sail their orb ; the porches wide
 Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night ;
 And the bright Titan, frenzied with new woes,
 Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent
 His spirit to the sorrow of the time ;
 And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
 Upon the boundaries of day and night,
 He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.
 There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
 Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice
 Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
 Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear :
 " O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
 And sky-engender'd, Son of Mysteries !
 All unrevealed even to the powers
 Which met at thy creating ! at whose joys
 And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
 I, Cœlus, wonder how they came and whence ;
 And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,
 Distinct, and visible ; symbols divine,
 Manifestations of that beauteous life
 Diffused unseen throughout eternal space ;
 Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child !

Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses !
 There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
 Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
 I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne !
 To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
 Found way from forth the thunders round his head !
 Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.
 Art thou, too, near such doom ? vague fear there is :
 For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
 Divine ye were created, and divine
 In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,
 Unruffled, like high Gods, ye lived and ruled :
 Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath ;
 Actions of rage and passion ; even as
 I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
 In men who die. — This is the grief, O Son !
 Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall !
 Yet do thou strive ; as thou art capable,
 As thou canst move about, an evident God,
 And canst oppose to each malignant hour
 Ethereal presence : — I am but a voice ;
 My life is but the life of winds and tides, —
 No more than winds and tides can I avail : —
 But thou canst. — Be thou therefore in the van
 Of circumstance ; yea, seize the arrow's barb
 Before the tense string murmur. — To the earth !
 For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
 Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
 And of thy seasons be a careful nurse." —
 Ere half this region-whisper had come down
 Hyperion arose, and on the stars
 Lifted his curvèd lids, and kept them wide
 Until it ceased ; and still he kept them wide :
 And still they were the same bright, patient stars.
 Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
 Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
 Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
 And plunged all noiseless into the deep night.

BOOK II.

JUST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings
 Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
 And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place
 Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.
 It was a den where no insulting light
 Could glimmer on their tears; where their own
 groans
 They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
 Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
 Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
 Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd
 Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
 Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns ;
 And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
 Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
 Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,
 Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
 Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled :
 Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.
 Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
 Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon,
 With many more, the brawniest in assault,
 Were pent in regions of laborious breath ;
 Dungeon'd in opaque element to keep
 Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their
 limbs
 Locked up like veins of metal, cramped and
 screwed ;
 Without a motion, save of their big hearts
 Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed
 With sanguine, feverous, boiling gurge of pulse.
 Mnemosyne was straying in the world ;
 Far from her moon had Phœbe wanderèd ;
 And many else were free to roam abroad,
 But for the main, here found they covert drear.

Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
 Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque
 Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
 When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
 In dull November, and their chancel vault,
 The heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.
 Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
 Or word, or look, or action of despair.
 Creüs was one; his ponderous iron mace
 Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
 Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
 Iäpetus another; in his grasp,
 A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue
 Squeezed from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd
 length

Dead; and because the creature could not spit
 Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
 Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,
 As though in pain: for still upon the flint
 He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
 And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
 Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
 Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
 Though feminine, than any of her sons:
 More thought than woe was in her dusky face
 For she was prophesying of her glory;
 And in her wide imagination stood
 Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
 By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.
 Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
 So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
 Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
 Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelf,
 Upon his elbow raised, all prostrate else,
 Shadow'd Enceladus; once tame and mild
 As grazing ox unworried in the meads;
 Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
 He meditated, plotted, and even now

Was hurling mountains in that second war,
Not long delay'd, that scared the younger Gods
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.
Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close
Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight;
No shape distinguishable, more than when
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the
clouds:

And many else whose names may not be told.
For when the muse's wings are air-ward spread,
Who shall delay her flight? And she must chant
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climbed
With damp and slippery footing from a depth
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
Till on the level height their steps found ease:
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face:
There saw she direst strife; the supreme God
At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.
Against these plagues he strove in vain: for Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison: so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house
Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise;
So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,

Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
But that he met Enceladus's eye,
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
Came like an inspiration ; and he shouted,
"Titans, behold your God!" at which some
groan'd ;
Some started on their feet ; some also shouted ;
Some wept, some wail'd — all bow'd with reverence ;
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,
Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,
Her eyebrows thin and jet, and hollow eyes.
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
Among Winter lifts his voice ; there is a noise
Among immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to load
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp :
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines ;
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
No other sound succeeds ; but ceasing here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom
Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
Thus grew it up : — " Not in my own sad breast,
Which is its own great judge and searcher out,
Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
Not in the legends of the first of days,
Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
Which starry Uranus with finger bright
Saved from the shores of darkness, when the waves
Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom ;
And the which book ye know I ever kept
For my firm-based footstool : — Ah, infirm !
Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
Of element, earth, water, air, and fire, —
At war, at peace, or inter-quarrelling
One against one, or two, or three, or all,

Each several one against the other three,
 As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods
 Drown both, and press them both against earth's
 face,

Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
 Unhinges the poor world; — not in that strife,
 Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,
 Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
 No, nowhere can unriddle, though I search,
 And pore on Nature's universal scroll
 Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
 The first-born of all shaped and palpable Gods,
 Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
 Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,
 O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are
 here !

O Titans, shall I say 'Arise !' — Ye groan :
 Shall I say 'Crouch !' — Ye groan. What can I
 then ?

O Heaven wide ! O unseen parent dear !
 What can I ? Tell me; all ye brethren Gods,
 How we can war, how engine our great wrath !
 O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear
 Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,
 Ponderest high and deep ; and in thy face
 I see, astonied, that severe content
 Which comes of thought and musing : give us
 help !”

So ended Saturn ; and the God of the Sea,
 Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
 But cogitation in his watery shades,
 Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,
 In murmurs, which his first endeavouring tongue
 Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.
 “ O ye, whom wrath consumes ! who, passion-stung,
 Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies !
 Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,

My voice is not a bellows unto ire.
Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop :
And in the proof much comfort will I give,
If ye will take that comfort in its truth.
We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
Hast sifted well the atom-universe ;
But for this reason, that thou art the King,
And only blind from sheer supremacy,
One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
Through which I wander'd to eternal truth.
And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
So art thou not the last ; it cannot be.
Thou art not the beginning nor the end.
From chaos and parental darkness came
Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
And with it light, and light engendering
Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
The whole enormous matter into life.
Upon that very hour, our parentage,
The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest :
Then thou first-born, and we the giant-race,
Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain ;
O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well !
As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once
chiefs ;
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
In form and shape compact and beautiful,
In will, in action free, companionship,
And thousand other signs of purer life ;
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,

A power more strong in beauty, born of us
 And fated to excel us, as we pass
 In glory that old Darkness : nor are we
 Thereby more conquered than by us the rule
 Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
 Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
 And feedeth still, more comely than itself ?
 Can it deny the chiefdom of green groves ?
 Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
 Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
 To wander wherewithal and find its joys ?
 We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
 Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
 But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower
 Above us in their beauty, and must reign
 In right thereof ; for 'tis the eternal law
 That first in beauty should be first in might :
 Yea, by that law, another race may drive
 Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
 Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
 My dispossessor ? Have ye seen his face ?
 Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along
 By noble winged creatures he hath made ?
 I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
 With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
 That it enforced me to bid sad farewell
 To all my empire ; farewell sad I took,
 And hither came, to see how dolorous fate
 Had wrought upon ye ; and how I might best
 Give consolation in this woe extreme.
 Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

Whether through pozed conviction, or disdain,
 They guarded silence, when Oceanus
 Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell ?
 But so it was, none answer'd for a space,
 Save one whom none regarded, Clymene :
 And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,

With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild,
Thus wording timidly among the fierce :
“ O Father ! I am here the simplest voice,
And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
There to remain for ever, as I fear :
I would not bode of evil, if I thought
So weak a creature could turn off the help
Which by just right should come of mighty Gods ;
Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,
And know that we had parted from all hope.
I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief ;
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth ;
So that I felt a movement in my heart
To chide, and to reproach that solitude
With songs of misery, music of our woes ;
And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell
And murmur'd into it, and made melody —
O melody no more ! for while I sang,
And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
Just opposite, an island of the sea,
There came enchantment with the shifting wind
That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
I threw my shell away upon the sand,
And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
With that new blissful golden melody.
A living death was in each gush of sounds,
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string :
And then another, then another strain,
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,

To hover round my head, and make me sick
 Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
 And I was stopping up my frantic ears,
 When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
 A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
 And still it cried, 'Apollo! young Apollo!
 The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!'
 I fled, it follow'd me, and cried, 'Apollo!'
 O Father, and O Brethren! had ye felt
 Those pains of mine! O Saturn, hadst-thou felt,
 Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
 Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard!"

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook
 That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
 Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,
 And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice
 Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:
 The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
 In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
 Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
 He lean'd; not rising, from supreme contempt.
 "Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
 Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods?
 Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
 That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,
 Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,
 Could agonize me more than baby-words
 In midst of this dethronement horrible.
 Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all.
 Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?
 Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?
 Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,
 Thy scalding in the seas? What! have I roused
 Your spleens with so few simple words as these?
 O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:
 O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes
 Wide glaring for revenge." — As this he said,

He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,
 Still without intermission speaking thus :
 “ Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,
 And purge the ether of our enemies ;
 How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,
 And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,
 Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
 O let him feel the evil he hath done ;
 For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
 Much pain have I for more than loss of realms :
 The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled ;
 Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
 When all the fair Existences of heaven
 Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak :—
 That was before our brows were taught to frown,
 Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds ;
 That was before we knew the winged thing,
 Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
 And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
 Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced —
 Hyperion, lo ! his radiance is here ! ”

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
 And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name
 Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
 A pallid gleam across his features stern :
 Not savage, for he saw full many a God
 Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,
 And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
 But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
 Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
 When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.
 In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the moon,
 Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
 All the sad spaces of oblivion,
 And every gulf, and every chasm old,
 And every height, and every sullen depth,

Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams :
And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and near,
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,
Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion : — a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he staid to view
The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself.
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East :
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp,
He utter'd, while his hands, contemplative,
He press'd together, and in silence stood.
Despondence seized again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day,
And many hid their faces from the light :
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood ; and, at their glare,
Uprose Iapetus, and Creüs too,
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode
To where he tower'd on his eminence.
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name ;
Hyperion from the peak loud answer'd " Saturn !"
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods
Gave from their hollow throats the name of
" Saturn !"

BOOK III.

THUS in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazed were those Titans utterly.
O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes!
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:
A solitary sorrow best befits
Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find
Many a fallen old Divinity
Wandering in vain about bewilder'd shores.
Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;
For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse.
Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,
And let the clouds of even and of morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,
On sands or in great deeps, vermilion turn
Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surprised.
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
And poplars; and lawn-shading palms, and beech,
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade:
Apollo is once more the golden theme!
Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers?
Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wander'd forth
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.

The nightingale had ceased, and a few stars
 Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
 Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle
 There was no covert, no retired cave
 Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves,
 Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
 He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
 Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
 Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
 While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
 With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
 And there was purport in her looks for him,
 Which he with eager guess began to read
 Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said :
 " How camest thou over the unfooted sea ?
 Or hath that antique mien and robed form
 Moved in these vales invisible till now ?
 Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er
 The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
 In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced
 The rustle of those ample skirts about
 These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
 Lift up their heads, and still the whisper pass'd.
 Goddess ! I have beheld those eyes before,
 And their eternal calm, and all that face,
 Or I have dream'd." — " Yes," said the supreme
 shape,
 " Thou hast dream'd of me ; and awaking up
 Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
 Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast
 Unwearied ear of the whole universe
 Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
 Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange
 That thou shouldst weep, so gifted ? Tell me, youth,
 What sorrow thou canst feel ; for I am sad
 When thou dost shed a tear : explain thy griefs
 To one who in this lonely isle hath been
 The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,

From the young day when first thy infant hand
Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
Could bend that bow heroic to all times.
Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power
Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
Of loveliness new-born." — Apollo then,
With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,
Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat
Throbb'd with the syllables: — " Mnemosyne !
Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how ;
Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest ?
Why should I strive to show what from thy lips
Would come no mystery ? For me, dark, dark,
And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes :
I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
Until a melancholy numbs my limbs ;
And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,
Like one who once had wings. — O why should I
Feel cursed and thwarted, when the liegeless air
Yields to my step aspirant ? why should I
Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet ?
Goddess benign ! point forth some unknown thing :
Are there not other regions than this isle ?
What are the stars ? There is the sun, the sun !
And the most patient brilliance of the moon !
And stars by thousands ! Point me out the way
To any one particular beauteous star,
And I will flit into it with my lyre,
And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.
I have heard the cloudy thunder : Where is power ?
Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
Makes this alarum in the elements,
While I here idle listen on the shores
In fearless yet in aching ignorance ?
O tell me, lonely Goddess ! by thy harp,
That waileth every morn and eventide,
Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves !

Mute thou remainest — Mute? yet I can read
 A wondrous lesson in thy silent face :
 Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
 Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,
 Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
 Creations and destroyings, all at once
 Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
 And deify me, as if some blithe wine
 Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
 And so become immortal.” — Thus the God,
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
 Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs :
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death ;
 Or like still to one who should take leave
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
 As hot as death’s is chill, with fierce convulse
 Die into life : so young Apollo anguish’d ;
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
 Her arms as one who prophesied. — At length
 Apollo shriek’d ; — and lo ! from all his limbs
 Celestial

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



What more felicity can fall to creature
Than to enjoy delight with liberty ?
Fate of the Butterfly. — SPENSER.

DEDICATION.



TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

GLORY and loveliness have pass'd away ;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the east to meet the smiling day :
No crowds of nymphs soft-voiced and young and gay,
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May.
But there are left delights as high as these.
And I shall ever bless my destiny,
That in a time when under pleasant trees
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

Places of nestling green for poets made. — *Story of Rimini.*

I STOOD tiptoe upon a little hill,
The air was cooling, and so very still,
That the sweet buds which with a modest pride
Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,
Their scanty-leaved, and finely-tapering stems,
Had not yet lost the starry diadems
Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.
The clouds were pure and white as flocks new-
shorn,
And fresh from the clear brook ; sweetly they slept
On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves ;
For not the faintest motion could be seen
Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.
There was wide wandering for the greediest eye,
To peer about upon variety ;
Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim,
And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim ;
To picture out the quaint and curious bending
Of a fresh woodland alley never-ending :
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,
Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves.
I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free
As though the fanning wings of Mercury
Had play'd upon my heels : I was light-hearted,
And many pleasures to my vision started ;
So I straightway began to pluck a posy
Of luxuries bright, milky, soft and rosy.

A bush of May-flowers with the bees about them ;
 Ah, sure no tasteful nook could be without them !
 And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,
 And let long grass grow round the roots, to keep
 them
 Moist, cool, and green ; and shade the violets,
 'That they may bind the moss in leafy nets.

A filbert-hedge with wild-briar overtined,
 And clumps of woodbine taking the soft wind
 Upon their summer thrones ; there too should be
 The frequent-chequer of a youngling tree,
 That with a score of light green brethren shoots
 From the quaint mossiness of aged roots :
 Round which is heard a spring-head of clear waters,
 Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters,
 The spreading blue-bells : it may haply mourn
 That such fair clusters should be rudely torn
 From their fresh beds, and scatter'd thoughtlessly
 By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,
 Ye ardent marigolds !
 Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,
 For great Apollo bids
 That in these days your praises should be sung
 On many harps, which he has lately strung ;
 And when again your dewiness he kisses,
 Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses :
 So haply when I rove in some far vale,
 His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet peas, on tiptoe for a flight :
 With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,
 And taper fingers catching at all things,
 To bind them all about with tiny rings.
 Linger awhile upon some bending planks
 That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,

And watch intently Nature's gentle doings :
They will be found softer than ring-doves' cooings.
How silent comes the water round that bend !
Not the minutest whisper does it send
To the o'erhanging salallows : blades of grass
Slowly across the chequer'd shadows pass.
Why you might read two sonnets, ere they reach
To where the hurrying freshnesses aye preach
A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds ;
Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,
Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,
To taste the luxury of sunny beams
Temper'd with coolness. How they ever wrestle
With their own sweet delight, and ever nestle
Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand !
If you but scantily hold out the hand,
That very instant not one will remain :
But turn your eye, and they are there again.
The ripples seem right glad to reach those cresses,
And cool themselves among the emerald tresses ;
The while they cool themselves, they freshness give,
And moisture, that the bowery green may live :
So keeping up an interchange of favours,
Like good men in the truth of their behaviours.
Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop
From low-hung branches : little space they stop ;
But sip, and twitter, and their feathers sleek ;
Then off at once, as in a wanton freak :
Or perhaps, to show their black and golden wings,
Pausing upon their yellow flutterings.
Were I in such a place, I sure should pray
That nought less sweet might call my thoughts
away,
Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown
Fanning away the dandelion's down ;
Than the light music of her nimble toes
Patting against the sorrel as she goes.
How she would start, and blush, thus to be caught

Playing in all her innocence of thought !
O let me lead her gently o'er the brook,
Watch her half-smiling lips and downward look ;
O let me for one moment touch her wrist ;
Let me onè moment to her breathing list ;
And as she leaves me, may she often turn
Her fair eyes looking through her locks auburne.
What next ? a tuft of evening primroses,
O'er which the mind may hover till it dozes ;
O'er which it well might take a pleasant sleep,
But that 'tis ever startled by the leap
Of buds into ripe flowers ; or by the flitting
Of divers moths, that aye their rest are quitting ;
Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
Coming into the blue with all her light.
O Maker of sweet poets ! dear delight
Of this fair world and all its gentle livers ;
Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,
Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,
Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,
Lover of loneliness, and wandering,
Of upcast eye, and tender pondering !
Thee must I praise above all other glories
That smile us on to tell delightful stories.
For what has made the sage or poet write
But the fair paradise of Nature's light ?
In the calm grandeur of a sober line,
We see the waving of the mountain pine ;
And when a tale is beautifully staid,
We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade :
When it is moving on luxurious wings,
The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings :
Fair dewy roses brush against our faces,
And flowering laurels spring from diamond vases ;
O'erhead we see the jasmine and sweet-briar,
And bloomy grapes laughing from green attire ;
While at our feet, the voice of crystal bubbles

Charms us at once away from all our troubles :
 So that we feel uplifted from the world,
 Walking upon the white clouds wreath'd and curl'd.
 So felt he, who first told how Psyche went
 On the smooth wind to realms of wonderment ;
 What Psyche felt, and Love, when their full lips
 First touch'd ; what amorous and fondling nips
 They gave each other's cheeks ; with all their sighs,
 And how they kist each other's tremulous eyes :
 The silver lamp,— the ravishment — the wonder —
 The darkness — loneliness — the fearful thunder ;
 Their woes gone by, and both to heaven up flown,
 To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne.
 So did he feel, who pull'd the boughs aside,
 That we might look into a forest wide,
 To catch a glimpse of Fauns, and Dryades
 Coming with softest rustle through the trees ;
 And garlands woven of flowers wild, and sweet,
 Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet :
 Telling us how fair trembling Syrinx fled
 Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.
 Poor Nymph, — poor Pan, — how did he weep to
 find
 Nought but a lovely sighing of the wind
 Along the reedy stream ! a half-heard strain,
 Full of sweet desolation — balmy pain.

What first inspired a bard of old to sing
 Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring ?
 In some delicious ramble, he had found
 A little space, with boughs all woven round ;
 And in the midst of all, a clearer pool
 Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool
 The blue sky, here and there serenely peeping,
 Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping.
 And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,
 A meek and forlorn flower, with nought of pride,
 Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,

To woo its own sad image into nearness :
 Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move ;
 But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.
 So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,
 Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot ;
 Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
 Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale.

Where had he been, from whose warm head
 outflew
 That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,
 That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,
 Coming ever to bless
 The wanderer by moonlight ? to him bringing
 Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly singing
 From out the middle air, from flowery nests,
 And from the pillowy silkiness that rests
 Full in the speculation of the stars.
 Ah ! surely he had burst our mortal bars ;
 Into some wondrous region he had gone,
 To search for thee, divine Endymion !

He was a Poet, sure a lover too,
 Who stood on Latmus' top, what time there blew
 Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below ;
 And brought, in faintness solemn, sweet, and slow,
 A hymn from Dian's temple ; while upswelling,
 The incense went to her own starry dwelling.
 But though her face was clear as infants' eyes,
 Though she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice,
 The poet wept at her so piteous fate,
 Wept that such beauty should be desolate :
 So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,
 And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion.

Queen of the wide air ; thou most lovely queen
 Of all the brightness that mine eyes have seen !
 As thou exceedest all things in thy shine,

So every tale does this sweet tale of thine.
O for three words of honey, that I might
Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night !

Where distant ships do seem to show their keels,
Phœbus awhile delay'd his mighty wheels,
And turn'd to smile upon thy bashful eyes,
Ere he his unseen pomp would solemnize.
The evening weather was so bright, and clear,
That men of health were of unusual cheer ;
Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's call,
Or young Apollo on the pedestal :
And lovely women were as fair and warm,
As Venus looking sideways in alarm.
The breezes were ethereal, and pure,
And crept through half-closed lattices to cure
The languid sick : it cool'd their fever'd sleep,
And soothed them into slumbers full and deep.
Soon they awoke clear-eyed : nor burn'd with
 thirsting,
Nor with hot fingers, nor with temples bursting :
And springing up, they met the wondering sight
Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with delight ;
Who feel their arms, and breasts, and kiss, and stare,
And on their placid foreheads part the hair.
Young men and maidens at each other gazed,
With hands held back, and motionless, amazed
To see the brightness in each other's eyes ;
And so they stood, fill'd with a sweet surprise,
Until their tongues were loosed in poesy.
Therefore no lover did of anguish die :
But the soft numbers, in that moment spoken,
Made silken ties, that never may be broken.
Cynthia ! I cannot tell the greater blisses
That follow'd thine, and thy dear shepherd's kisses :
Was there a poet born ? — But now no more —
My wandering spirit must no farther soar.

SPECIMEN OF AN INDUCTION TO A
POEM.

LO! I must tell a tale of chivalry ;
For large white plumes are dancing in mine
eye.

Not like the formal crest of latter days :
But bending in a thousand graceful ways ;
So graceful, that it seems no mortal hand,
Or e'en the touch of Archimago's wand,
Could charm them into such an attitude.
We must think rather, that in playful mood,
Some mountain breeze had turn'd its chief delight
To show this wonder of its gentle might.

Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry ;
For while I muse, the lance points slantingly
Athwart the morning air ; some lady sweet,
Who cannot feel for cold her tender feet,
From the worn top of some old battlement
Hails it with tears, her stout defender sent ;
And from her own pure self no joy dissembling,
Wraps round her ample robe with happy trem-
bling.

Sometimes when the good knight his rest could
take,

It is reflected, clearly, in a lake,
With the young ashen boughs, 'gainst which it rests,
And th' half-seen mossiness of linnets' nests.

Ah ! shall I ever tell its cruelty,
When the fire flashes from a warrior's eye,
And his tremendous hand is grasping it,
And his dark brow for very wrath is knit ?
Or when his spirit, with more calm intent
Leaps to the honours of a tournament,

And makes the gazers round about the ring
Stare at the grandeur of the balancing?
No, no! this is far off: — then how shall I
Revive the dying tones of minstrelsy,
Which linger yet about long gothic arches,
In dark green ivy, and among wild larches?
How sing the splendour of the revelries,
When butts of wine are drank off to the lees?
And that bright lance, against the fretted wall,
Beneath the shade of stately banneral,
Is slung with shining cuirass, sword, and shield?
Where ye may see a spur in bloody field,
Light-footed damsels move with gentle paces
Round the wide hall, and show their happy faces:
Or stand in courtly talk by fives and sevens:
Like those fair stars that twinkle in the heavens.
Yet must I tell a tale of chivalry:
Or wherefore comes that knight so proudly by?
Wherefore more proudly does the gentle knight
Rein in the swelling of his ample might?
Spenser! thy brows are arched, open, kind,
And come like a clear sun-rise to my mind;
And always does my heart with pleasure dance,
When I think on thy noble countenance:
Where never yet was aught more earthly seen
Than the pure freshness of thy laurels green.
Therefore, great bard, I not so fearfully
Call on thy gentle spirit to hover nigh
My daring steps: or if thy tender care,
Thus startled unaware,
Be jealous that the foot of other wight
Should madly follow that bright path of light
Traced by thy loved Libertas; he will speak,
And tell thee that my prayer is very meek;
That I will follow with due reverence,
And start with awe at mine own strange pretence.
Him thou wilt hear; so I will rest in hope
To see wide plains, fair trees, and lawny slope;

The morn, the eve, the light, the shade, the
flowers;
Clear streams, smooth lakes, and overlooking
towers.

CALIDORE.

A FRAGMENT.

YOUNG Calidore is paddling o'er the lake ;
His healthful spirit eager and awake
To feel the beauty of a silent eve,
Which seem'd full loth this happy world to leave,
The light dwelt o'er the scene so lingeringly.
He bares his forehead to the cool blue sky,
And smiles at the far clearness all around,
Until his heart is well nigh overwound,
And turns for calmness to the pleasant green
Of easy slopes, and shadowy trees that lean
So elegantly o'er the waters' brim
And show their blossoms trim.
Scarce can his clear and nimble eyesight follow
The freaks and dartings of the black-wing'd swal-
low,
Delighting much, to see it half at rest,
Dip so refreshingly its wings and breast
'Gainst the smooth surface, and to mark anon,
The widening circles into nothing gone.

And now the sharp keel of his little boat
Comes up with ripple, and with easy float
And glides into a bed of water-lilies :
Broad-leaved are they, and their white canopies
Are upward turn'd to catch the heavens' dew.
Near to a little island's point they grew ;
Whence Calidore might have the goodliest view

Of this sweet spot of earth. The bowery shore
Went off in gentle windings to the hoar
And light blue mountains: but no breathing man
With a warm heart, and eye prepared to scan
Nature's clear beauty, could pass lightly by
Objects that look'd out so invitingly
On either side. These, gentle Calidore
Greeted, as he had known them long before.

The sidelong view of swelling leafiness,
Which the glad setting sun in gold doth dress,
Whence, ever and anon, the joy outsprings,
And scales upon the beauty of its wings.

The lonely turret, shatter'd, and outworn,
Stands venerably proud; too proud to mourn
Its long-lost grandeur: fir-trees grow around,
Aye dropping their hard fruit upon the ground.
The little chapel, with the cross above,
Upholding wreaths of ivy; the white dove,
That on the windows spreads his feathers light,
And seems from purple clouds to wing its flight.

Green tufted islands casting their soft shades
Across the lake; sequester'd leafy glades,
That through the dimness of their twilight show
Large dock-leaves, spiral foxgloves, or the glow
Of the wild cat's-eyes, or the silvery stems
Of delicate birch-trees, or long grass which hems
A little brook. The youth had long been viewing
These pleasant things, and heaven was bedewing
The mountain flowers, when his glad senses caught
A trumpet's silver voice. Ah! it was fraught
With many joys for him: the warder's ken
Had found white coursers prancing in the glen,
Friends very dear to him he soon will see;
So pushes off his boat most eagerly.
And soon upon the lake he skims along,

Deaf to the nightingale's first under-song;
Nor minds he the white swans that dream so
sweetly :

His spirit flies before him so completely.
And now he turns a jutting point of land,
Whence may be seen the castle gloomy and grand :
Nor will a bee buzz round two swelling peaches,
Before the point of his light shallop reaches
Those marble steps that through the water dip :
Now over them he goes with hasty trip,
And scarcely stays to ope the folding doors :
Anon he leaps along the oaken floors
Of halls and corridors.

Delicious sounds! those little bright-eyed things
That float about the air on azure wings,
Had been less heartfelt by him than the clang
Of clattering hoofs; into the court he sprang,
Just as two noble steeds, and palfreys twain,
Were slanting out their necks with loosen'd rein ;
While from beneath the threatening portcullis
They brought their happy burthens. What a kiss,
What gentle squeeze he gave each lady's hand !
How tremblingly their delicate ankles spann'd !
Into how sweet a trance his soul was gone,
While whisperings of affection
Made him delay to let their tender feet
Come to the earth; with an incline so sweet
From their low palfreys o'er his neck they bent :
And whether there were tears of languishment,
Or that the evening dew had pearl'd their tresses,
He feels a moisture on his cheek, and blesses
With lips that tremble, and with glistening eye,
All the soft luxury
That nestled in his arms. A dimpled hand,
Fair as some wonder out of fairy land,
Hung from his shoulder like the drooping flowers
Of whitest Cassia, fresh from summer showers :
And this he fondled with his happy cheek,

As if for joy he would no further seek :
 When the kind voice of good Sir Clerimond
 Came to his ear, like something from beyond
 His present being : so he gently drew
 His warm arms, thrilling now with pulses new,
 From their sweet thrall, and forward gently bending,
 Thank'd Heaven that his joy was never-ending ;
 While 'gainst his forehead he devoutly press'd
 A hand Heaven made to succour the distress'd ;
 A hand that from the world's bleak promontory
 Had lifted Calidore for deeds of Glory.

Amid the pages, and the torches' glare,
 There stood a knight, patting the flowing hair
 Of his proud horse's mane : he was withal
 A man of elegance, and stature tall :
 So that the waving of his plumes would be
 High as the berries of a wild ash-tree,
 Or as the winged cap of Mercury.
 His armour was so dexterously wrought
 In shape, that sure no living man had thought
 It hard and heavy steel : but that indeed
 It was some glorious form, some splendid weed,
 In which a spirit new come from the skies
 Might live, and show itself to human eyes.
 'Tis the far-famed, the brave Sir Gondibert,
 Said the good man to Calidore alert ;
 While the young warrior with a step of grace
 Came up, — a courtly smile upon his face,
 And mailed hand held out, ready to greet
 The large-eyed wonder, and ambitious heat
 Of the aspiring boy ; who as he led
 Those smiling ladies, often turn'd his head
 To admire the visor arch'd so gracefully
 Over a knightly brow ; while they went by
 The lamps that from the high-roof'd hall were
 pendent,
 And gave the steel a shining quite transcendent.

Soon in a pleasant chamber they are seated,
The sweet-lipp'd ladies have already greeted
All the green leaves that round the window clamber,
To show their purple stars, and bells of amber.
Sir Gondibert has doff'd his shining steel,
Gladdening in the free and airy feel
Of a light mantle ; and while Clerimond
Is looking round about him with a fond
And placid eye, young Calidore is burning
To hear of knightly deeds, and gallant spurning
Of all unworthiness ; and how the strong of arm
Kept off dismay, and terror, and alarm
From lovely woman : while brimful of this,
He gave each damsel's hand so warm a kiss,
And had such manly ardour in his eye,
That each at other look'd half-staringly :
And then their features started into smiles,
Sweet as blue heavens o'er enchanted isles.
Softly the breezes from the forest came,
Softly they blew aside the taper's flame ;
Clear was the song from Philomel's far bower ;
Grateful the incense from the lime-tree flower ;
Mysterious, wild, the far-heard trumpet's tone ;
Lovely the moon in ether, all alone :
Sweet too the converse of these happy mortals,
As that of busy spirits when the portals
Are closing in the West : or that soft humming
We hear around when Hesperus is coming.
Sweet be their sleep.

TO SOME LADIES,

ON RECEIVING A CURIOUS SHELL.

WHAT though, while the wonders of nature
exploring,
I cannot your light, mazy footsteps attend ;
Nor listen to accents, that almost adoring,
Bless Cynthia's face, the enthusiast's friend :

Yet over the steep, whence the mountain-stream
rushes,
With you, kindest friends, in idea I rove :
Mark the clear tumbling crystal, its passionate
gushes,
Its spray, that a wild flower kindly bedews.

Why linger ye so, the wild labyrinth strolling ?
Why breathless, unable your bliss to declare ?
Ah ! you list to the nightingale's tender condoling,
Responsive to sylphs, in the moon-beamy air.

'Tis morn, and the flowers with dew are yet droop-
ing,
I see you are treading the verge of the sea :
And now ! ah, I see it — you just now are stooping
To pick up the keepsake intended for me.

If a cherub, on pinions of silver descending,
Had brought me a gem from the fretwork of
Heaven ;
And smiles with his star-cheering voice sweetly
blending,
The blessings of Tighe had melodiously given ;

It had not created a warmer emotion
 Than the present, fair nymphs, I was blest with
 from you ;
 Than the shell, from the bright golden sands of the
 ocean,
 Which the emerald waves at your feet gladly
 threw.

For, indeed, 'tis a sweet and peculiar pleasure,
 (And blissful is he who such happiness finds,)
 To possess but a span of the hour of leisure
 In elegant, pure, and aerial minds.



ON RECEIVING A COPY OF VERSES
 FROM THE SAME LADIES.

HAST thou from the caves of Golconda, a gem
 Pure as the ice-drop that froze on the moun-
 tain ?

Bright as the humming-bird's green diadem,
 When it flutters in sunbeams that shine through
 a fountain ?

Hast thou a goblet for dark sparkling wine ?
 That goblet right heavy, and massy, and gold ?
 And splendidly mark'd with the story divine
 Of Armida the fair, and Rinaldo the bold ?

Hast thou a steed with a mane richly flowing ?
 Hast thou a sword that thine enemy's smart is ?
 Hast thou a trumpet rich melodies blowing ?
 And wear'st thou the shield of the famed Bri-
 tomartis ?

What is it that hangs from thy shoulder so brave,
 Embroider'd with many a spring-peering flower ?

Is it a scarf that thy fair lady gave?
And hastest thou now to that fair lady's bower?

Ah! courteous Sir Knight, with large joy thou art
crown'd;
Full many the glories that brighten thy youth!
I will tell thee my blisses, which richly abound
In magical powers to bless and to soothe.

On this scroll thou seest written in characters fair
A sun-beaming tale of a wreath, and a chain:
And, warrior, it nurtures the property rare
Of charming my mind from the trammels of pain.

This canopy mark: 'tis the work of a fay;
Beneath its rich shade did King Oberon languish,
When lovely Titania was far, far away,
And cruelly left him to sorrow and anguish.

There, oft would he bring from his soft-sighing lute
Wild strains to which, spell-bound, the nightin-
gales listen'd!
The wondering spirits of Heaven were mute,
And tears 'mong the dewdrops of morning oft
glisten'd.

In this little dome, all those melodies strange,
Soft, plaintive, and melting, for ever will sigh;
Nor e'er will the notes from their tenderness change,
Nor e'er will the music of Oberon die.

So when I am in a voluptuous vein,
I pillow my head on the sweets of the rose,
And list to the tale of the wreath, and the chain,
Till its echoes depart; then I sink to repose.

Adieu! valiant Eric! with joy thou art crown'd,
Full many the glories that brighten thy youth,

I too have my blisses, which richly abound
In magical powers to bless, and to soothe.



TO ———.

HADST thou lived in days of old,
O what wonders had been told
Of thy lively countenance,
And thy humid eyes, that dance
In the midst of their own brightness,
In the very fane of lightness ;
Over which thine eyebrows, leaning,
Picture out each lovely meaning :
In a dainty bend they lie,
Like the streaks across the sky,
Or the feathers from a crow,
Fallen on a bed of snow.
Of thy dark hair, that extends
Into many graceful bends :
As the leaves of hellebore
Turn to whence they sprung before.
And behind each ample curl
Peeps the richness of a pearl.
Downward too flows many a tress
With a glossy waviness,
Full, and round like globes that rise
From the censer to the skies
Through sunny hair. Add too, the sweetness
Of thy honied voice ; the neatness
Of thine ankle lightly turn'd :
With those beauties scarce discern'd,
Kept with such sweet privacy,
That they seldom meet the eye
Of the little Loves that fly
Round about with eager pry.
Saving when with freshening lave,

Thou dipp'st them in the taintless wave ;
Like twin water-lilies, born
In the coolness of the morn.
O, if thou hadst breathed then,
Now the Muses had been ten.
Couldst thou wish for lineage higher
Than twin-sister of Thalia ?
At least for ever, evermore
Will I call the Graces four.
Hadst thou lived when chivalry
Lifted up her lance on high,
Tell me what thou wouldst have been ?
Ah ! I see the silver sheen
Of thy broider'd-floating vest
Covering half thine ivory breast :
Which, O Heavens ! I should see,
But that cruel Destiny
Has placed a golden cuirass there,
Keeping secret what is fair.
Like sunbeams in a cloudlet nested,
Thy locks in knightly casque are rested :
O'er which bend four milky plumes,
Like the gentle lily's blooms
Springing from a costly vase.
See with what a stately pace
Comes thine alabaster steed ;
Servant of heroic deed !
O'er his loins, his trappings glow
Like the northern lights on snow.
Mount his back ! thy sword unsheath !
Sign of the enchanter's death ·
Bane of every wicked spell ;
Silencer of dragon's yell.
Alas ! thou this wilt never do :
Thou art an enchantress too,
And wilt surely never spill
Blood of those whose eyes can kill.

TO HOPE.

WHEN by my solitary hearth I sit,
 And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in
 gloom ;
 When no fair dreams before my "mind's eye" flit,
 And the bare heath of life presents no bloom ;
 Sweet Hope ! ethereal balm upon me shed,
 And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

Whene'er I wander, at the fall of night,
 Where woven boughs shut out the moon's bright
 ray,
 Should sad Despondency my musings fright,
 And frown, to drive fair Cheerfulness away,
 Peep with the moonbeams through the leafy roof,
 And keep that fiend Despondence far aloof.

Should Disappointment, parent of Despair,
 Strive for her son to seize my careless heart
 When, like a cloud, he sits upon the air,
 Preparing on his spell-bound prey to dart :
 Chase him away, sweet Hope, with visage bright,
 And fright him, as the morning frightens night !

Whene'er the fate of those I hold most dear
 Tells to my fearful breast a tale of sorrow,
 O bright-eyed Hope, my morbid fancy cheer ;
 Let me awhile thy sweetest comforts borrow :
 Thy heaven-born radiance around me shed,
 And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head !

Should e'er unhappy love my bosom pain,
 From cruel parents, or relentless fair,
 O let me think it is not quite in vain
 To sigh out sonnets to the midnight air !
 Sweet Hope ! ethereal balm upon me shed,
 And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.

In the long vista of the years to roll,
 Let me not see our country's honour fade !
 O let me see our land retain her soul !
 Her pride, her freedom ; and not freedom's shade.
 From thy bright eyes unusual brightness shed —
 Beneath thy pinions canopy my head !

Let me not see the patriot's high bequest,
 Great liberty ! how great in plain attire !
 With the base purple of a court oppress'd,
 Bowing her head, and ready to expire :
 But let me see thee stoop from Heaven on wings
 That fill the skies with silver glitterings !

And as, in sparkling majesty, a star
 Gilds the bright summit of some gloomy cloud ;
 Brightening the half-veil'd face of heaven afar :
 So, when dark thoughts my boding spirit shroud,
 Sweet Hope ! celestial influence round me shed,
 Waving thy silver pinions o'er my head.

February, 1815.



IMITATION OF SPENSER.

.
NOW morning from her orient chamber came
 And her first footsteps touch'd a verdant
 hill :
 Crowning its lawny crest with amber flame,
 Silvering the untainted gushes of its rill ;
 Which, pure from mossy beds, did down distil,
 And after parting beds of simple flowers,
 By many streams a little lake did fill,
 Which round its marge reflected woven bowers,
 And, in its middle space, a sky that never lowers.

There the kingfisher saw his plumage bright,
 Vying with fish of brilliant dye below ;
 Whose silken fins' and golden scales' light
 Cast upward, through the waves, a ruby glow :
 There saw the swan his neck of arched snow,
 And oar'd himself along with majesty :
 Sparkled his jetty eyes ; his feet did show
 Beneath the waves like Afric's ebony,
 And on his back a fay reclined voluptuously.

Ah ! could I tell the wonders of an isle
 That in that fairest lake had placed been,
 I could e'en Dido of her grief beguile ;
 Or rob from aged Lear his bitter teen :
 For sure so fair a place was never seen
 Of all that ever charm'd romantic eye :
 It seem'd an emerald in the silver sheen
 Of the bright waters ; or as when on high,
 Through clouds of fleecy white, laughs the cœr-
 lean sky.

And all around it dipp'd luxuriously
 Slopings of verdure through the glossy tide,
 Which, as it were in gentle amity,
 Rippled delighted up the flowery side ;
 As if to glean the ruddy tears it tried,
 Which fell profusely from the rose-tree stem !
 Haply it was the workings of its pride,
 In strife to throw upon the shore a gem
 Outvying all the buds in Flora's diadem.

.

WOMAN ! when I behold thee flippant, vain,
 Inconstant, childish, proud, and full of fancies ;
 Without that modest softening that enhances
 The downcast eye, repentant of the pain

That its mild light creates to heal again ;
 E'en then, elate, my spirit leaps and prances,
 E'en then my soul with exultation dances
 For that to love, so long, I've dormant lain :
 But when I see thee meek, and kind, and tender,
 Heavens ! how desperately do I adore
 Thy winning graces ; — to be thy defender
 I hotly burn — to be a Calidore —
 A very Red Cross Knight — a stout Leander —
 Might I be loved by thee like these of yore.

Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted hair ;
 Soft dimpled hands, white neck, and creamy
 breast ;
 Are things on which the dazzled senses rest
 Till the fond, fixed eyes, forget they stare.
 From such fine pictures, Heavens ! I cannot dare
 To turn my admiration, though unpossess'd
 They be of what is worthy, — though not drest,
 In lovely modesty, and virtues rare.
 Yet these I leave as thoughtless as a lark ;
 These lures I straight forget, — e'en ere I dine,
 Or thrice my palate moisten : but when I mark
 Such charms with mild intelligences shine,
 My ear is open like a greedy shark,
 To catch the tunings of a voice divine.

Ah ! who can e'er forget so fair a being ?
 Who can forget her half-retiring sweets ?
 God ! she is like a milk-white lamb that bleats
 For man's protection. Surely the All-seeing,
 Who joys to see us with his gifts agreeing,
 Will never give him pinions, who intreats
 Such innocence to ruin, — who vilely cheats
 A dove-like bosom. In truth there is no freeing
 One's thoughts from such a beauty ; when I hear
 A lay that once I saw her hand awake,
 Her form seems floating palpable, and near :

Had I e'er seen her from an arbour take
 A dewy flower, oft would that hand appear,
 And o'er my eyes the trembling moisture shake.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

MY heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk :
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thy happiness, —
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt
 mirth !

O for a beaker full of the warm South,
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stained mouth ;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim :

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and
 dies ;

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs ;
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away ! away ! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :
Already with thee ! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays ;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy
ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild ;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;
Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves ;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen ; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath ;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy !
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
 No hungry generations tread thee down ;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown :
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for
 home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self !
 Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fated to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side ; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades :
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
 Fled is that music : — do I wake or sleep ?



ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness !
 Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme :
 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady ?
 What men or gods are these ? what maidens loath ?
 What mad pursuit ? What struggle to escape ?
 What pipes and timbrels ? What wild ecstasy ?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter ; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on ;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone :
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare ;
 Bold Lover, never, never, canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve ;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair !

Ah, happy, happy boughs ! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu ;
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new ;
 More happy love ! more happy, happy love !
 For ever warm, and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting and for ever young ;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high sorrowful and cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?
 To that green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest ?
 What little town by river or sea-shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn ?
 Ah ! little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed ;
 Thou, silent form ! dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !

When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," — that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.



ODE TO PSYCHE.

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers
 wrung
 By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung,
 Even into thine own soft-conched ear :
 Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
 The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes ?
 I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
 And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
 Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
 In deepest grass, beneath the whispering roof
 Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
 A brooklet, scarce espied :
 'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers fragrant-eyed,
 Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
 They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass ;
 Their arms embraced, and their pinions too ;
 Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
 As if disjointed by soft-handed slumber,
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber
 At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love :
 The winged boy I knew ;
 But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove ?
 His Psyche true !
 O latest-born and loveliest vision far
 Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy !

Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
 Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky ;
 Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
 Nor altar heap'd with flowers ;
 Nor Virgin-choir to make delicious moan
 Upon the midnight hours ;
 No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
 From chain-swung censer teeming ;
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.
 O brightest ! though too late for antique vows,
 Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire ;
 Yet even in these days so far retired
 From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
 Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
 I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.
 So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
 Upon the midnight hours !
 Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
 From swung censer teeming :
 Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branched thoughts, new-grown with pleasant
 pain,
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind :
 Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
 Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep ;
 And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep ;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress
 With the wreathed trellis of a working brain,
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,

With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
 Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same :
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win,
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in !



FANCY.

EVER let the Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home :
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth ;
 Then let winged Fancy wander
 Through the thought still spread beyond her :
 Open wide the mind's cage-door,
 She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
 O sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
 Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
 And the enjoying of the Spring
 Fades as does its blossoming :
 Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
 Blushing through the mist and dew,
 Cloys with tasting : What do then ?
 Sit thee by the ingle, when
 The sear fagot blazes bright,
 Spirit of a winter's night ;
 When the soundless earth is muffled,
 And the caked snow is shuffled
 From the ploughboy's heavy shoon ;
 When the Night doth meet the Noon
 In a dark conspiracy
 To banish Even from her sky.
 Sit thee there, and send abroad,
 With a mind self-overawed,
 Fancy, high-commission'd : — send her !

She has vassals to attend her :
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost ;
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather ;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray ;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth :
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it : — thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear ;
Rustle of the reaped corn ;
Sweet birds antheming the morn :
And, in the same moment — hark !
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold ;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst ;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May ;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearled with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep ;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin ;
Freckled nest eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest ;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm ;
Acorns ripe down-pattering
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
 Every thing is spoilt by use ;
 Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
 Too much gazed at ? Where's the maid
 Whose lip mature is ever new ?
 Where's the eye, however blue,
 Doth not weary ? Where's the face
 One would meet in every place ?
 Where's the voice, however soft,
 One would hear so very oft ?
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
 Let, then, winged Fancy find
 Thee a mistress to thy mind :
 Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter
 Ere the God of Torment taught her
 How to frown and how to chide ;
 With a waist and with a side
 White as Hebe's, when her zone
 Slipt its golden clasp, and down
 Fell her kirtle to her feet,
 While she held the goblet sweet,
 And Jove grew languid. — Break the mesh
 Of the Fancy's silken leash ;
 Quickly break her prison-string,
 And such joys as these she'll bring. —
 Let the winged Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home.



ODE.

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth !
 Have ye souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new ?
 Yes, and those of heaven commune
 With the spheres of sun and moon ;

With the noise of fountains wondrous,
 And the parle of voices thund'rous ;
 With the whisper of heaven's trees
 And one another, in soft ease
 Seated on Elysian lawns
 Browsed by none but Dian's fawns ;
 Underneath large blue-bells tented,
 Where the daisies are rose-scented,
 And the rose herself has got
 Perfume which on earth is not ;
 Where the nightingale doth sing
 Not a senseless, tranced thing,
 But divine melodious truth ;
 Philosophic numbers smooth ;
 Tales and golden histories
 Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
 On the earth ye live again ;
 And the souls ye left behind you
 Teach us, here, the way to find you,
 Where your other souls are joying,
 Never slumber'd, never cloying.
 Here, your earth-born souls still speak
 To mortals, of their little week ;
 Of their sorrows and delights ;
 Of their passions and their spites ;
 Of their glory and their shame ;
 What doth strengthen and what maim.
 Thus ye teach us, every day,
 Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth !
 Ye have souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new !

TO AUTUMN.

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness !
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves
 run ;
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease,
 For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy
 cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy
 hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined
 flowers ;
 And sometime like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
 Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are
 they ?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,
 While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river shallows, borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ;
 Hedge-crickets sing ; and now with treble soft
 The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.



ODE ON MELANCHOLY.

NO, no ! go not to Lethe, neither twist
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous
 wine ;
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine ;
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries ;
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud ;
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies ;
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty — Beauty that must die ;
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips

Bidding adieu ; and aching Pleasure nigh,
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips :
 Ay, in the very temple of Delight
 Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous
 tongue
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine ;
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung.



LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN.

SOULS of poets dead and gone,
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern,
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern ?
 Have ye tippled drink more fine
 Than mine host's Canary wine ?
 Or are fruits of Paradise
 Sweeter than those dainty pies
 Of venison ? O generous food !
 Drest as though bold Robin Hood
 Would, with his maid Marian,
 Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
 Mine host's sign-board flew away,
 Nobody knew whither, till
 An astrologer's old quill
 To a sheepskin gave the story, —
 Said he saw you in your glory,
 Underneath a new old-sign
 Sipping beverage divine,
 And pledging with contented smack
 The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern ?



ROBIN HOOD.

TO A FRIEND.

NO! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years :
Many times have Winter's shears,
Frozen North, and chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more ;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill ;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amazed to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you ;
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold ;
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can,

Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent ;
For he left the merry tale,
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din ;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn ;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the "greené shawe ;"
All are gone away and past !
And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his tufted grave,
And if Marian should have
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze :
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the dock-yard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas ;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her — strange ! that honey
Can't be got without hard money !

So it is ; yet let us sing
Honour to the old bow-string !
Honour to the bugle horn !
Honour to the woods unshorn !
Honour to the Lincoln green !
Honour to the archer keen !
Honour to tight Little John,
And the horse he rode upon !
Honour to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood !
Honour to Maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood clan !
Though their days have hurried by,
Let us two a burden try.

SLEEP AND POETRY.

As I lay in my bed slepe full unmete
 Was unto me, but why that I ne might
 Rest I ne wist, for there n' as erthly wight
 (As I suppose) had more of hertis ese
 Than I, for I n' ad sicknesse nor disese. — CHAUCER.

WHAT is more gentle than a wind in summer?
 What is more soothing than the pretty hum-
 mer

That stays one moment in an open flower,
 And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower?
 What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing
 In a green island, far from all men's knowing?
 More healthful than the leafiness of dales?
 More secret than a nest of nightingales?
 More serene than Cordelia's countenance?
 More full of visions than a high romance?
 What, but thee, Sleep? Soft closer of our eyes!
 Low murmurer of tender lullabies!
 Light hoverer around our happy pillows!
 Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows!
 Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses!
 Most happy listener! when the morning blesses
 Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes
 That glance so brightly at the new sun-rise.

But what is higher beyond thought than thee?
 Fresher than berries of a mountain-tree?
 More strange, more beautiful, more smooth, more
 regal,
 Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim-seen
 eagle?
 What is it? And to what shall I compare it?
 It has a glory, and nought else can share it:

The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy,
 Chasing away all worldliness and folly :
 Coming sometimes like fearful claps of thunder ;
 Or the low rumblings earth's regions under ;
 And sometimes like a gentle whispering
 Of all the secrets of some wondrous thing
 That breathes about us in the vacant air ;
 So that we look around with prying stare,
 Perhaps to see shapes of light, aerial limning ;
 And catch soft floatings from a faint-heard hymn-
 ing ;
 To see the laurel-wreath, on high suspended,
 That is to crown our name when life is ended.
 Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice,
 And from the heart up-springs, rejoice ! rejoice !
 Sounds which will reach the Framer of all things,
 And die away in ardent mutterings.

No one who once the glorious sun has seen,
 And all the clouds, and felt his bosom clean
 For his great Maker's presence, but must know
 What 'tis I mean, and feel his being glow :
 Therefore no insult will I give his spirit,
 By telling what he sees from native merit.

O Poesy ! for thee I hold my pen,
 That am not yet a glorious denizen
 Of thy wide heaven — should I rather kneel
 Upon some mountain-top until I feel
 A glowing splendour round about me hung,
 And echo back the voice of thine own tongue ?
 O Poesy ! for thee I grasp my pen,
 That am not yet a glorious denizen
 Of thy wide heaven ; yet, to my ardent prayer,
 Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air,
 Smooth'd for intoxication by the breath
 Of flowering bays, that I may die a death
 Of luxury, and my young spirit follow

The morning sunbeams to the great Apollo,
 Like a fresh sacrifice ; or, if I can bear
 The o'erwhelming sweets, 'twill bring me to the fair
 Visions of all places : a bowery nook
 Will be elysium — an eternal book
 Whence I may copy many a lovely saying
 About the leaves, and flowers — about the playing
 Of nymphs in woods, and fountains ; and the shade
 Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid ;
 And many a verse from so strange influence
 That we must ever wonder how, and whence
 It came. Also imaginings will hover
 Round my fire-side, and haply there discover
 Vistas of solemn beauty, where I'd wander
 In happy silence, like the clear Meander
 Through its lone vales ; and where I found a spot
 Of awfuller shade, or an enchanted grot,
 Or a green hill o'erspread with chequer'd dress
 Of flowers, and fearful from its loveliness,
 Write on my tablets all that was permitted,
 All that was for our human senses fitted.
 Then the events of this wide world I'd seize
 Like a strong giant, and my spirit tease
 Till at its shoulders it should proudly see
 Wings to find out an immortality.

Stop and consider ! life is but a day ;
 A fragile dewdrop on its perilous way
 From a tree's summit ; a poor Indian's sleep
 While his boat hastens to the monstrous steep
 Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan ?
 Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown ;
 The reading of an ever-changing tale ;
 The light uplifting of a maiden's veil ;
 A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air ;
 A laughing school-boy, without grief or care,
 Riding the springy branches of an elm.

O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
Myself in poesy ! so I may do the deed
That my own soul has to itself decreed.
Then I will pass the countries that I see
In long perspective, and continually
Taste their pure fountains. First the realm I'll pass
Of Flora, and Old Pan : sleep in the grass,
Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,
And choose each pleasure that my fancy sees,
Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady places,
To woo sweet kisses from averted faces —
Play with their fingers, touch their shoulders white
Into a pretty shrinking with a bite
As hard as lips can make it : till agreed,
A lovely tale of human life we'll read.
And one will teach a tame dove how it best
May fan the cool air gently o'er my rest :
Another, bending o'er her nimble tread,
Will set a green robe floating round her head,
And still will dance with ever-varied ease,
Smiling upon the flowers and the trees :
Another will entice me on, and on,
Through almond blossoms and rich cinnamon ;
Till in the bosom of a leafy world
We rest in silence, like two gems upcurl'd
In the recesses of a pearly shell.

And can I ever bid these joys farewell ?
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,
Where I may find the agonies, the strife
Of human hearts : for lo ! I see afar,
O'er-sailing the blue cragginess, a car
And steeds with streamy manes — the charioteer
Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear :
And now the numerous trappings quiver lightly
Along a huge cloud's ridge ; and now with sprightly
Wheel downward come they into fresher skies,
Tipt round with silver from the sun's bright eyes.

Still downward with capacious whirl they glide ;
 And now I see them on a green-hill side
 In breezy rest among the nodding stalks.
 The charioteer with wondrous gesture talks
 To the trees and mountains ; and there soon appear
 Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear,
 Passing along before a dusky space
 Made by some mighty oaks : as they would chase
 Some ever-fleeting music, on they sweep.
 Lo ! how they murmur, laugh, and smile, and weep :
 Some with upholden hand and mouth severe ;
 Some with their faces muffled to the ear
 Between their arms ; some clear in youthful bloom,
 Go glad and smilingly athwart the gloom ;
 Some looking back, and some with upward gaze ;
 Yes, thousands in a thousand different ways
 Flit onward — now a lovely wreath of girls
 Dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls ;
 And now broad wings. Most awfully intent
 The driver of those steeds is forward bent,
 And seems to listen : O that I might know
 All that he writes with such a hurrying glow !

The visions all are fled — the car is fled
 Into the light of heaven, and in their stead
 A sense of real things comes doubly strong,
 And, like a muddy stream, would bear along
 My soul to nothingness : but I will strive
 Against all doubtings, and will keep alive
 The thought of that same chariot, and the strange
 Journey it went.

Is there so small a range
 In the present strength of manhood, that the high
 Imagination cannot freely fly
 As she was wont of old ? prepare her steeds,
 Paw up against the light, and do strange deeds
 Upon the clouds ? Has she not shown us all ?

From the clear space of ether, to the small
 Breath of new buds unfolding ? From the meaning
 Of Jove's large eyebrow, to the tender greening
 Of April meadows ? here her altar shone,
 E'en in this isle ; and who could paragon
 The fervid choir that lifted up a noise
 Of harmony, to where it aye will poise
 Its mighty self of convoluting sound,
 Huge as a planet, and like that roll round,
 Eternally around a dizzy void ?
 Ay, in those days the Muses were nigh cloy'd
 With honours ; nor had any other care
 Than to sing out and soothe their wavy hair.

Could all this be forgotten ? Yes, a schism
 Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,
 Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
 Men were thought wise who could not understand
 His glories : with a puling infant's force
 They sway'd about upon a rocking-horse,
 And thought it Pegasus. Ah, dismal-soul'd !
 The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd
 Its gathering waves — ye felt it not. The blue
 Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
 Of summer night collected still to make
 The morning precious : Beauty was awake !
 Why were ye not awake ? But ye were dead
 To things ye-knew not of, — were closely wed
 To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
 And compass vile : so that ye taught a school
 Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
 Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
 Their verses tallied. Easy was the task :
 A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
 Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race !
 That blasphemed the bright Lyrist to his face,
 And did not know it, — no, they went about,
 Holding a poor, decrepit standard out,

Mark'd with most flimsy mottoes, and in large
The name of one Boileau !

O ye whose charge

It is to hover round our pleasant hills !
Whose congregated majesty so fills
My boundly reverence, that I cannot trace
Your hallow'd names, in this unholy place,
So near those common folk ; did not their shames
Affright you ? Did our old lamenting Thames
Delight you ? Did ye never cluster round
Delicious Avon, with a mournful sound,
And weep ? Or did ye wholly bid adieu
To regions where no more the laurel grew ?
Or did ye stay to give a welcoming
To some lone spirits who could proudly sing
Their youth away, and die ? 'Twas even so :
But let me think away those times of woe :
Now 'tis a fairer season ; ye have breathed
Rich benedictions o'er us ; ye have wreathed
Fresh garlands : for sweet music has been heard
In many places ; some has been upstirr'd
From out its crystal dwelling in a lake,
By a swan's ebon bill ; from a thick brake,
Nestled and quiet in a valley mild,
Bubbles a pipe ; fine sounds are floating wild
About the earth : happy are ye and glad.
These things are, doubtless : yet in truth we've had
Strange thunders from the potency of song ;
Mingled indeed with what is sweet and strong,
From majesty : but in clear truth the themes
Are ugly cubs, the Poet's Polyphemes
Disturbing the grand sea. A drainless shower
Of light is poesy ; 'tis the supreme of power ;
'Tis might half slumbering on its own right arm.
The very archings of her eyelids charm
A thousand willing agents to obey,
And still she governs with the mildest sway :

But strength alone though of the Muses born
 Is like a fallen angel : trees uptorn,
 Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres
 Delight it ; for it feeds upon the burrs
 And thorns of life ; forgetting the great end
 Of poesy, that it should be a friend
 To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of man.

Yet I rejoice : a myrtle fairer than
 E'er grew in Paphos, from the bitter weeds
 Lifts its sweet heap into the air, and feeds
 A silent space with ever-sprouting green.
 All tenderest birds there find a pleasant screen,
 Creep through the shade with jaunty fluttering,
 Nibble the little cupped flowers and sing.
 Then let us clear away the choking thorns
 From round its gentle stem ; let the young fawns
 Yeaned in after-times, when we are flown,
 Find a fresh sward beneath it, overgrown
 With simple flowers : let there nothing be
 More boisterous than a lover's bended knee ;
 Nought more ungentle than the placid look
 Of one who leans upon a closed book ;
 Nought more untranquil than the grassy slopes
 Between two hills. All hail, delightful hopes !
 As she was wont, th' imagination
 Into most lovely labyrinths will be gone,
 And they shall be accounted poet kings
 Who simply tell the most heart-easing things.
 O may these joys be ripe before I die !

Will not some say that I presumptuously
 Have spoken ? that from hastening disgrace
 'Twere better far to hide my foolish face ?
 That whining boyhood should with reverence bow
 Ere the dread thunderbolt could reach me ? How !
 If I do hide myself, it sure shall be
 In the very fane, the light of Poesy :

If I do fall, at least I will be laid
 Beneath the silence of a poplar shade ;
 And over me the grass shall be smooth shaven ;
 And there shall be a kind memorial graven.
 But off, Despondence ! miserable bane !
 They should not know thee, who athirst to gain
 A noble end, are thirsty every hour.
 What though I am not wealthy in the dower
 Of spanning wisdom ; though I do not know
 The shiftings of the mighty winds that blow
 Hither and thither all the changing thoughts
 Of man : though no great ministering reason

sorts

Out the dark mysteries of human souls
 To clear conceiving : yet there ever rolls
 A vast idea before me, and I glean
 Therefrom my liberty : thence too I've seen
 The end and aim of Poesy. 'Tis clear
 As anything most true ; as that the year
 Is made of the four seasons — manifest
 As a large cross, some old cathedral's crest,
 Lifted to the white clouds. Therefore should I
 Be but the essence of deformity,
 A coward, did my very eyelids wink
 At speaking out what I have dared to think.
 Ah ! rather let me like a madman run
 Over some precipice ; let the hot sun
 Melt my Dedalian wings, and drive me down
 Convulsed and headlong ? Stay ! an inward
 frown

Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile.
 An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,
 Spreads awfully before me. How much toil !
 How many days ! what desperate turmoil !
 Ere I can have explored its widenesses.
 Ah, what a task ! upon my bended knees,
 I could unsay those — no, impossible !
 Impossible !

For sweet relief I'll dwell
 On humbler thoughts, and let this strange assay
 Begun in gentleness die so away.
 E'en now all tumult from my bosom fades :
 I turn full-hearted to the friendly aids
 That smooth the path of honour ; brotherhood,
 And friendliness, the nurse of mutual good.
 The hearty grasp that sends a pleasant sonnet
 Into the brain ere one can think upon it ;
 The silence when some rhymes are coming out ;
 And when they're come, the very pleasant rout :
 The message certain to be done to-morrow.
 'Tis perhaps as well that it should be to borrow
 Some precious book from out its snug retreat,
 To cluster round it when we next shall meet.
 Scarce can I scribble on ; for lovely airs
 Are fluttering round the room like doves in pairs ;
 Many delights of that glad day recalling,
 When first my senses caught their tender falling.
 And with these airs come forms of elegance
 Stooping their shoulders o'er a horse's prance,
 Careless, and grand — fingers soft and round
 Parting luxuriant curls ; and the swift bound
 Of Bacchus from his chariot, when his eye
 Made Ariadne's cheek look blushingly.
 Thus I remember all the pleasant flow
 Of words at opening a portfolio.

Things such as these are ever harbingers
 To trains of peaceful images : the stirr
 Of a swan's neck unseen among the rushes :
 A linnet starting all about the bushes :
 A butterfly, with golden wings broad-parted,
 Nestling a rose, convulsed as though it smarted
 With over-pleasure — many, many more,
 Might I indulge at large in all my store
 Of luxuries : yet I must not forget
 Sleep, quiet with his poppy coronet :

For what there may be worthy in these rhymes
I partly owe to him : and thus, the chimes
Of friendly voices had just given place
To as sweet a silence, when I 'gan retrace
The pleasant day, upon a couch at ease.
It was a poet's house who keeps the keys
Of pleasure's temple — round about were hung
The glorious features of the bards who sung
In other ages — cold and sacred busts
Smiled at each other. Happy he who trusts
To clear Futurity his darling fame !
Then there were fauns and satyrs taking aim
At swelling apples with a frisky heap
And reaching fingers, 'mid a luscious heap
Of vine-leaves. Then there rose to view a fane
Of liney marble, and thereto a train
Of nymphs approaching fairly o'er the sward :
One, loveliest, holding her white hand toward
The dazzling sun-rise : two sisters sweet
Bending their graceful figures till they meet
Over the trippings of a little child :
And some are hearing, eagerly, the wild
Thrilling liquidity of dewy piping.
See, in another picture, nymphs are wiping
Cherishingly Diana's timorous limbs ;
A fold of lawny mantle dabbling swims
At the bath's edge, and keeps a gentle motion
With the subsiding crystal : as when ocean
Heaves calmly its broad swelling smoothness o'er
Its rocky marge, and balances once more
The patient weeds ; that now unshent by foam
Feel all about their undulating home.
Sappho's meek head was there half smiling down
At nothing ; just as though the earnest frown
Of over-thinking had that moment gone
From off her brow, and left her all alone.

Great Alfred's too, with anxious, pitying eyes,
As if he always listen'd to the sighs

Of the goaded world ; and Kosciusko's, worn
By horrid suffrance — mightily forlorn.

Petrarch, outstepping from the shady green,
Starts at the sight of Laura ; nor can wean
His eyes from her sweet face. Most happy they !
For over them was seen a free display
Of outspread wings, and from between them shone
The face of Poesy : from off her throne
She overlook'd things that I scarce could tell,
The very sense of where I was might well
Keep sleep aloof : but more than that there came
Thought after thought to nourish up the flame
Within my breast ; so that the morning light
Surprised me even from a sleepless night ;
And up I rose refresh'd, and glad, and gay,
Resolving to begin that very day
These lines ; and howsoever they be done,
I leave them as a father does his son.



STANZAS.

IN a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity :
The north cannot undo them,
With a sleety whistle through them ;
Nor frozen thawings glue them
From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy brook,
Thy bubblings ne'er remember
Apollo's summer look ;
But with a sweet forgetting,

They stay their crystal fretting,
Never, never petting
About the frozen time.

Ah ! would 'twere so with many
A gentle girl and boy !
But were there ever any
Writhed not at passed joy ?
To know the change and feel it,
When there is none to heal it,
Nor numbed sense to steal it,
Was never said in rhyme.

EPISTLES.



Among the rest a shepherd (though but young
Yet hartned to his pipe) with all the skill
His few yeeres could, began to fill his quill.

Britannia's Pastorals. — BROWNE.

EPISTLES.

—◆—
TO GEORGE FELTON MATHEW.

SWEET are the pleasures that to verse belong,
And doubly sweet a brotherhood in song ;
Nor can remembrance, Mathew ! bring to view
A fate more pleasing, a delight more true
Than that in which the brother poets joy'd,
Who, with combined powers, their wit employ'd
To raise a trophy to the drama's muses.
The thought of this great partnership diffuses
Over the genius-loving heart, a feeling
Of all that's high, and great, and good, and healing.
Too partial friend ! fain would I follow thee
Past each horizon of fine poesy ;
Fain would I echo back each pleasant note
As o'er Sicilian seas, clear anthems float
'Mong the light skimming gondolas far parted,
Just when the sun his farewell beam has darted :
But 'tis impossible ; far different cares
Beckon me sternly from soft " Lydian airs,"
And hold my faculties so long in thrall,
That I am oft in doubt whether at all
I shall again see Phœbus in the morning :
Or flush'd Aurora in the roseate dawning !
Or a white Naiad in a rippling stream ;
Or a wrapt seraph in a moonlight beam ;
Or again witness what with thee I've seen,
The dew by fairy feet swept from the green,
After a night of some quaint jubilee
Which every elf and fay had come to see :

When bright processions took their airy march
Beneath the curvèd moon's triumphal arch.

But might I now each passing moment give
To the coy Muse, with me she would not live
In this dark city, nor would condescend
'Mid contradictions her delights to lend.
Should e'er the fine-eyed maid to me be kind,
Ah! surely it must be whene'er I find
Some flowery spot, sequester'd, wild, romantic,
That often must have seen a poet frantic ;
Where oaks, that erst the Druid knew, are growing,
And flowers, the glory of one day, are blowing ;
Where the dark-leaved laburnum's drooping clusters
Reflect athwart the stream their yellow lustres,
And intertwined the cassia's arms unite,
With its own drooping buds, but very white.
Where on one side are covert branches hung,
'Mong which the nightingales have always sung
In leafy quiet ; where to pry, aloof
Atween the pillars of the sylvan roof,
Would be to find where violet beds were nestling,
And where the bee with cowslip bells was wrestling.
There must be too a ruin dark and gloomy,
To say " Joy not too much in all that's bloomy."

Yet this is vain — O Mathew ! lend thy aid
To find a place where I may greet the maid —
Where we may soft humanity put on,
And sit, and rhyme, and think on Chatterton ;
And that warm-hearted Shakspeare sent to meet
him
Four laurell'd spirits, heavenward to entreat him.
With reverence would we speak of all the sages
Who have left streaks of light athwart their ages :
And thou shouldst moralize on Milton's blindness,
And mourn the fearful dearth of human kindness
To those who strove with the bright golden wing

Of genius, to flap away each sting
 Thrown by the pitiless world. We next could tell
 Of those who in the cause of freedom fell ;
 Of our own Alfred, of Helvetic Tell ;
 Of him whose name to every heart 's a solace,
 High-minded and unbending William Wallace.
 While to the rugged north our musing turns,
 We well might drop a tear for him and Burns.
 Felton ! without incitements such as these,
 How vain for me the niggard Muse to tease !
 For thee, she will thy every dwelling grace,
 And make " a sunshine in a shady place : "
 For thou wast once a flow'ret blooming wild,
 Close to the source, bright, pure, and undefiled,
 Whence gush the streams of song : in happy hour
 Came chaste Diana from her shady bower,
 Just as the sun was from the east uprising ;
 And, as for him some gift she was devising,
 Beheld thee, pluck'd thee, cast thee in the stream
 To meet her glorious brother's greeting beam.
 I marvel much that thou hast never told
 How, from a flower, into a fish of gold
 Apollo changed thee : how thou next didst seem
 A black-eyed swan upon the widening stream ;
 And when thou first didst in that mirror trace
 The placid features of a human face ;
 That thou hast never told thy travels strange,
 And all the wonders of the mazy range
 O'er pebbly crystal, and o'er golden sands ;
 Kissing thy daily food from Naiads' pearly hands.

November, 1815.



TO MY BROTHER GEORGE.

FULL many a dreary hour have I past,
 My brain bewilder'd, and my mind o'ercast
 With heaviness ; in seasons when I've thought

No sphery strains by me could e'er be caught
 From the blue dome, though I to dimness gaze
 On the far depth where sheeted lightning plays ;
 Or, on the wavy grass outstretch'd supinely,
 Pry 'mong the stars, to strive to think divinely :
 That I should never hear Apollo's song,
 Though feathery clouds were floating all along
 The purple west, and, two bright streaks between,
 The golden lyre itself were dimly seen :
 That the still murmur of the honey-bee
 Would never teach a rural song to me :
 That the bright glance from beauty's eyelids slanting
 Would never make a lay of mine enchanting,
 Or warm my breast with ardour to unfold
 Some tale of love and arms in time of old.

But there are times, when those that love the bay
 Fly from all sorrowing far, far away ;
 A sudden glow comes on them, nought they see
 In water, earth, or air, but poesy.
 It has been said, dear George, and true I hold it,
 (For knightly Spenser to Libertas told it,)
 That when a Poet is in such a trance,
 In air he sees white coursers paw and prance,
 Bestriden of gay knights, in gay apparel,
 Who at each other tilt in playful quarrel ;
 And what we, ignorantly, sheet-lightning call,
 Is the swift opening of their wide portal,
 When the bright warder blows his trumpet clear,
 Whose tones reach nought on earth but poet's ear,
 When these enchanted portals open wide,
 And through the light the horsemen swiftly glide,
 The Poet's eye can reach those golden halls,
 And view the glory of their festivals :
 Their ladies fair, that in the distance seem
 Fit for the silvering of a seraph's dream ;
 Their rich brimm'd goblets, that incessant run,
 Like the bright spots that move about the sun ;

And when upheld, the wine from each bright jar
 Pours with the lustre of a falling star.
 Yet further off are dimly seen their bowers,
 Of which no mortal eye can reach the flowers ;
 And 'tis right just, for well Apollo knows
 'Twould make the Poet quarrel with the rose.
 All that's reveal'd from that far seat of blisses,
 Is, the clear fountains' interchanging kisses,
 As gracefully descending, light and thin,
 Like silver streaks across a dolphin's fin,
 When he upswimmeth from the coral caves,
 And sports with half his tail above the waves.

These wonders strange he sees, and many more,
 Whose head is pregnant with poetic lore :
 Should he upon an evening ramble fare
 With forehead to the soothing breezes bare,
 Would he nought see but the dark, silent blue,
 With all its diamonds trembling through and
 through ?

Or the coy moon, when in the waviness
 Of whitest clouds she does her beauty dress,
 And staidly paces higher up, and higher,
 Like a sweet nun in holiday attire ?
 Ah, yes ! much more would start into his sight —
 The revelries and mysteries of night :
 And should I ever see them, I will tell you
 Such tales as needs must with amazement spell you.

These are the living pleasures of the bard :
 But richer far posterity's award.
 What does he murmur with his latest breath,
 While his proud eye looks through the film of
 death ?

“ What though I leave this dull and earthly mould,
 Yet shall my spirit lofty converse hold
 With after times. — The patriot shall feel
 My stern alarum, and unsheath his steel ;

Or in the senate thunder out my numbers,
 To startle princes from their easy slumbers.
 The sage will mingle with each moral theme
 My happy thoughts sententious : he will teem
 With lofty periods when my verses fire him,
 And then I'll stoop from heaven to inspire him.
 Lays have I left of such a dear delight
 That maids will sing them on their bridal-night.
 Gay villagers, upon a morn of May,
 When they have tired their gentle limbs with play,
 And form'd a snowy circle on the grass,
 And placed in midst of all that lovely lass
 Who chosen is their queen, — with her fine head
 Crowned with flowers purple, white, and red :
 For there the lily and the musk-rose sighing,
 Are emblems true of hapless lovers dying :
 Between her breasts, that never yet felt trouble,
 A bunch of violets full blown, and double,
 Serenely sleep : — she from a casket takes
 A little book, — and then a joy awakes
 About each youthful heart, — with stifled cries,
 And rubbing of white hands, and sparkling eyes :
 For she's to read a tale of hopes and fears ;
 One that I foster'd in my youthful years :
 The pearls, that on each glistening circlet sleep,
 Gush ever and anon with silent creep,
 Lured by the innocent dimples. To sweet rest
 Shall the dear babe, upon its mother's breast,
 Be lull'd with songs of mine. Fair world adieu !
 Thy dales and hills are fading from my view :
 Swiftly I mount, upon wide-spreading pinions,
 Far from the narrow bounds of thy dominions.
 Full joy I feel, while thus I cleave the air,
 That my soft verse will charm thy daughters fair,
 And warm thy sons !” Ah, my dear friend and
 brother,
 Could I, at once, my mad ambition smother,
 For tasting joys like these, sure I should be

Happier, and dearer to society.
 At times, 'tis true, I've felt relief from pain
 When some bright thought has darted through my
 brain :
 Through all that day I've felt a greater pleasure
 Than if I had brought to light a hidden treasure.
 As to my sonnets, though none else should heed-
 them,
 I feel delighted, still, that you should read them.
 Of late, too, I have had much calm enjoyment,
 Stretch'd on the grass at my best loved employ-
 ment
 Of scribbling lines for you. These things I thought
 While, in my face, the freshest breeze I caught.
 E'en now I am pillow'd on a bed of flowers
 That crowns a lofty cliff, which proudly towers
 Above the ocean waves. The stalks and blades
 Chequer my tablet with their quivering shades.
 On one side is a field of drooping oats,
 Through which the poppies show their scarlet coats,
 So pert and useless, that they bring to mind
 The scarlet coats that pester human-kind.
 And on the other side, outspread, is seen
 Ocean's blue mantle, streak'd with purple and
 green ;
 Now 'tis I see a canvas'd ship, and now
 Mark the bright silver curling round her prow.
 I see the lark down-dropping to his nest,
 And the broad-wing'd sea-gull never at rest ;
 For when no more he spreads his feathers free,
 His breast is dancing on the restless sea.
 Now I direct my eyes into the west,
 Which at this moment is in sun-beams drest :
 Why westward turn ? 'Twas but to say adieu !
 'Twas but to kiss my hand, dear George, to you !

August, 1816.

TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

OFT have you seen a swan superbly frowning,
 And with proud breast his own white shadow
 crowning ;
 He slants his neck beneath the waters bright
 So silently, it seems a beam of light
 Come from the galaxy : anon he sports, —
 With outspread wings the Naiad Zephyr courts,
 Or ruffles all the surface of the lake
 In striving from its crystal face to take
 Some diamond water-drops, and them to treasure
 In milky nest, and sip them off at leisure.
 But not a moment can he there ensure them,
 Nor to such downy rest can he allure them ;
 For down they rush as though they would be free,
 And drop like hours into eternity.
 Just like that bird am I in loss of time,
 Whene'er I venture on the stream of rhyme ;
 With shatter'd boat, oar snapt, and canvas rent,
 I slowly sail, scarce knowing my intent ;
 Still scooping up the water with my fingers,
 In which a trembling diamond never lingers.

By this, friend Charles, you may full plainly see
 Why I have never penn'd a line to thee :
 Because my thoughts were never free and clear,
 And little fit to please a classic ear ;
 Because my wine was of too poor a savour
 For one whose palate gladdens in the flavour
 Of sparkling Helicon : — small good it were
 To take him to a desert rude and bare,
 Who had on Baiæ's shore reclined at ease,
 While Tasso's page was floating in a breeze
 That gave soft music from Armida's bowers,
 Mingled with fragrance from her rarest flowers :

Small good to one who had by Mulla's stream
 Fondled the maidens with the breasts of cream ;
 Who had beheld Belphœbe in a brook,
 And lovely Una in a leafy nook,
 And Archimago leaning o'er his book :
 Who had of all that's sweet tasted, and seen,
 From silvery ripple, up to beauty's queen ;
 From the sequester'd haunts of gay Titania,
 To the blue dwelling of divine Urania :
 One, who of late had ta'en sweet forest walks
 With him who elegantly chats and talks —
 The wrong'd Libertas — who has told you stories
 Of laurel chaplets, and Apollo's glories ;
 Of troops chivalrous prancing through a city,
 And tearful ladies, made for love and pity :
 With many else which I have never known.
 Thus have I thought ; and days on days have flown
 Slowly, or rapidly — unwilling still
 For you to try my dull, unlearned quill.
 Nor should I now, but that I've known you long ;
 That you first taught me all the sweets of song :
 The grand, the sweet, the terse, the free, the fine :
 What swell'd with pathos, and what right divine :
 Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,
 And float along like birds o'er summer seas :
 Miltonian storms, and more, Miltonian tenderness :
 Michael in arms, and more, meek Eve's fair slen-
 derness.

Who read for me the sonnet swelling loudly
 Up to its climax, and then dying proudly ?
 Who found for me the grandeur of the ode,
 Growing, like Atlas, stronger from its load ?
 Who let me taste that more than cordial dram,
 The sharp, the rapier-pointed epigram ?
 Show'd me that epic was of all the king,
 Round, vast, and spanning all, like Saturn's ring ?
 You too upheld the veil from Clío's beauty,
 And pointed out the patriot's stern duty ;

The might of Alfred, and the shaft of Tell ;
 The hand of Brutus, that so grandly fell
 Upon a tyrant's head. Ah ! had I never seen,
 Or known your kindness, what might I have been ?
 What my enjoyments in my youthful years,
 Bereft of all that now my life endears ?
 And can I e'er these benefits forget ?
 And can I e'er repay the friendly debt ?
 No, doubly no ;— yet should these rhymings
 please,
 I shall roll on the grass with twofold ease ;
 For I have long time been my fancy feeding
 With hopes that you would one day think the
 reading
 Of my rough verses not an hour misspent ;
 Should it e'er be so, what a rich content !
 Some weeks have pass'd since last I saw the spires
 In lucent Thames reflected : — warm desires
 To see the sun o'er-peep the eastern dimness,
 And morning-shadows streaking into slimness
 Across the lawny fields, and pebbly water ;
 To mark the time as they grow broad and shorter ;
 To feel the air that plays about the hills,
 And sips its freshness from the little rills ;
 To see high, golden corn wave in the light
 When Cynthia smiles upon a summer's night,
 And peers among the cloudlets, jet and white,
 As though she were reclining in a bed
 Of bean-blossoms, in heaven freshly shed.
 No sooner had I stepp'd into these pleasures,
 Than I began to think of rhymes and measures ;
 The air that floated by me seem'd to say
 “ Write ! thou wilt never have a better day.”
 And so I did. When many lines I'd written,
 Though with their grace I was not oversmitten,
 Yet, as my hand was warm, I thought I'd better
 Trust to my feelings, and write you a letter.
 Such an attempt required an inspiration

Of a peculiar sort, — a consummation ; —
Which, had I felt, these scribblings might have
been

Verses from which the soul would never ween ;
But many days have past since last my heart
Was warm'd luxuriously by divine Mozart ;
By Arne delighted, or by Handel madden'd ;
Or by the song of Erin pierced and sadden'd :
What time you were before the music sitting,
And the rich notes to each sensation fitting.
Since I have walk'd with you through shady lanes
That freshly terminate in open plains,
And revell'd in a chat that ceased not,
When, at night-fall, among your books we got :
No, nor when supper came, nor after that, —
Nor when reluctantly I took my hat ;
No, nor till cordially you shook my hand
Mid-way between our homes : — your accents
bland

Still sounded in my ears, when I no more
Could hear your footsteps touch the gravelly floor.
Sometimes I lost them, and then found again ;
You changed the foot-path for the grassy plain.
In those still moments I have wish'd you joys
That well you know to honour : — “ Life's very toys
With him,” said I, “ will take a pleasant charm ;
It cannot be that aught will work him harm.”
These thoughts now come o'er me with all their
might : —
Again I shake your hand, — friend Charles, good
night.

September, 1816.

SONNETS.

SONNETS.



I.

TO A FRIEND WHO SENT ME SOME ROSES.

AS late I rambled in the happy fields,
What time the skylark shakes the tremulous
dew

From his lush clover covert ; — when anew
Adventurous knights take up their dinted shields ;
I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,

A fresh-blown musk-rose ; 'twas the first that
threw

Its sweets upon the summer : graceful it grew
As is the wand that queen Titania wields.

And, as I feasted on its fragrancy,

I thought the garden-rose it far excell'd ;

But when, O Wells ! thy roses came to me,

My sense with their deliciousness was spell'd :

Soft voices had they, that with tender plea

Whisper'd of peace, and truth, and friendliness
unquell'd.

II.

TO MY BROTHER GEORGE.

MANY the wonders I this day have seen :
The sun, when first he kist away the tears
That fill'd the eyes of Morn ; — the laurell'd
peers
Who from the feathery gold of evening lean ; —
The Ocean with its vastness, its blue green,
Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears, —
Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears
Must think on what will be, and what has been.
E'en now, dear George, while this for you I write,
Cynthia is from her silken curtains peeping
So scanty, that it seems her bridal night,
And she her half-discover'd revels keeping.
But what, without the social thought of thee,
Would be the wonders of the sky and sea ?

III.

TO ———.

HAD I a man's fair form, then might my sighs
Be echoed swiftly through that ivory shell
Thine ear, and find thy gentle heart; so well
Would passion arm me for the enterprise :
But ah ! I am no knight whose foeman dies ;
No cuirass glistens on my bosom's swell ;
I am no happy shepherd of the dell
Whose lips have trembled with a maiden's eyes.
Yet must I doat upon thee, — call thee sweet,
Sweeter by far than Hybla's honey'd roses
When steep'd in dew rich to intoxication.
Ah ! I will taste that dew, for me 'tis meet,
And when the moon her pallid face discloses,
I'll gather some by spells, and incantation.

IV.

O SOLITUDE! if I must with thee dwell,
Let it not be among the jumbled heap
Of murky buildings: climb with me the
steep, —
Nature's observatory — whence the dell,
In flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep
'Mongst boughs pavilion'd, where the deer's
swift leap
Startles the wild bee from the foxglove bell.
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with
thee,
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,
Whose words are images of thoughts refined,
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

v.

HOW many bards gild the lapses of time !
A few of them have ever been the food
Of my delighted fancy, — I could brood
Over their beauties, earthly, or sublime :
And often, when I sit me down to rhyme,
These will in throngs before my mind intrude :
But no confusion, no disturbance rude
Do they occasion ; 'tis a pleasing chime.
So the unnumber'd sounds that evening store ;
The songs of birds — the whispering of the leaves —
The voice of waters — the great bell that heaves
With solemn sound, — and thousand others
more,
That distance of recognizance bereaves,
Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

VI.

TO G. A. W.

NYMPH of the downward smile and sidelong
glance!
In what diviner moments of the day
Art thou most lovely? when gone far astray
Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance?
Or when serenely wandering in a trance
Of sober thought? Or when starting away,
With careless robe to meet the morning ray,
Thou sparest the flowers in thy mazy dance?
Haply 'tis when thy ruby lips part sweetly,
And so remain, because thou listenest:
But thou to please wert nurtured so completely
That I can never tell what mood is best,
I shall as soon pronounce which Grace more neatly
Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

VII.

WRITTEN ON THE DAY THAT MR. LEIGH HUNT
LEFT PRISON.

WHAT though, for showing truth to flatter'd
state,
Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,
In his immortal spirit, been as free
As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.
Minion of grandeur! think you he did wait?
Think you he nought but prison-walls did see,
Till, so unwilling, thou unturn'dst the key?
Ah, no! far happier, nobler was his fate!
In Spenser's halls he stray'd, and bowers fair,
Culling enchanted flowers; and he flew
With daring Milton through the fields of air:
To regions of his own his genius true
Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair
When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew?

VIII.

TO MY BROTHER.

SMALL, busy flames play through the fresh-laid
coals,
And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep
Like whispers of the household gods that keep
A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.
And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,
Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,
Upon the lore so voluble and deep,
That aye at fall of night our care condole.
This is your birth-day, Tom, and I rejoice
That thus it passes smoothly, quietly :
Many such eves of gently whispering noise
May we together pass, and calmly try
What are this world's true joys, — ere the great
Voice
From its fair face shall bid our spirits fly.

IX.

ADDRESSED TO HAYDON.

HIGH-MINDEDNESS, a jealousy for good,
A loving-kindness for the great man's fame,
Dwells here and there with people of no name,
In noisome alley, and in pathless wood :
And where we think the truth least understood,
Oft may be found a "singleness of aim,"
That ought to frighten into hooded shame
A money-mongering, pitiable brood.
How glorious this affection for the cause
Of steadfast genius, toiling gallantly !
What when a stout unbending champion awes
Envy, and malice to their native sty ?
Unnumber'd souls breathe out a still applause,
Proud to behold him in his country's eye.

X.

ADDRESSED TO THE SAME.

GREAT spirits now on earth are sojourning :
He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,
Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing :
He of the rose, the violet, the spring,
The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake :
And lo ! whose steadfastness would never take
A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.
And other spirits there are standing apart
Upon the forehead of the age to come ;
These, these will give the world another heart,
And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum
Of mighty workings ? ——
Listen awhile, ye nations, and be dumb.

XI.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen ;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne ·
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold :
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken ;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

XII.

ON LEAVING SOME FRIENDS AT AN EARLY
HOUR.

GIVE me a golden pen, and let me lean
On heap'd-up flowers, in regions clear, and far ;
Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,
Or hand of hymning angel, when 'tis seen
The silver strings of heavenly harp atween :
And let there glide by many a pearly car,
Pink robes, and wavy hair, and diamond jar,
And half-discover'd wings, and glances keen.
The while let music wander round my ears,
And as it reaches each delicious ending,
Let me write down a line of glorious tone,
And full of many wonders of the spheres :
For what a height my spirit is contending !
'Tis not content so soon to be alone.

XIII.

K EEN fitful gusts are whispering here and there
Among the bushes, half leafless and dry ;
The stars look very cold about the sky,
And I have many miles on foot to fare ;
Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,
Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,
Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,
Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair :
For I am brimful of the friendliness
That in a little cottage I have found ;
Of fair-hair'd Milton's eloquent distress,
And all his love for gentle Lycid' drown'd ;
Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,
And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

XIV.

TO one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven, — to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel, — an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

XV.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET.

THE poetry of earth is never dead :
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead :
That is the grasshopper's — he takes the lead
In summer luxury, — he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never :
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

XVI.

TO KOSCIUSKO.

GOOD Kosciusko ! thy great name alone
Is a full harvest whence to reap high feeling ;
It comes upon us like the glorious pealing
Of the wide spheres — an everlasting tone.
And now it tells me, that in worlds unknown,
The names of heroes, burst from clouds concealing,
Are changed to harmonies, for ever stealing
Through cloudless blue, and round each silver
throne.
It tells me too, that on a happy day,
When some good spirit walks upon the earth,
Thy name with Alfred's, and the great of yore,
Gently commingling, gives tremendous birth
To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far away
To where the great God lives for evermore.

XVII.

HAPPY is England ! I could be content
To see no other verdure than its own ;
To feel no other breezes than are blown
Through its tall woods with high romances blent ;
Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment
For skies Italian, and an inward groan
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,
And half forget what world or worldling meant.
Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters ;
Enough their simple loveliness for me,
Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging :
Yet do I often warmly burn to see
Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,
And float with them about the summer waters.

XVIII.

THE HUMAN SEASONS.

FOUR Seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of man :
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span :
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honey'd cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminatè, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven : quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furlèth close ; contented so to look
On mists in idleness — to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

XIX.

ON A PICTURE OF LEANDER.

COME hither, all sweet maidens soberly,
Down-looking aye, and with a chasten'd light,
Hid in the fringes of your eyelids white,
And meekly let your fair hands joined be,
As if so gentle that ye could not see,
Untouch'd, a victim of your beauty bright,
Sinking away to his young spirit's night,
Sinking bewilder'd 'mid the dreary sea :
'Tis young Leander toiling to his death ;
Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary lips
For Hero's cheek, and smiles against her smile.
O horrid dream ! see how his body dips
Dead-heavy ; arms and shoulders gleam awhile :
He's gone ; up bubbles all his amorous breath !

XX.

TO AILSA ROCK.

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean pyramid!
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowl's
screams!
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge
streams!
When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid?
How long is't since the mighty power bid
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sun-beams,
Or when gray clouds are thy cold cover-lid?
Thou answer'st not, for thou art dead asleep!
Thy life is but two dead eternities —
The last in air, the former in the deep;
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies —
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee
steep,
Another cannot wake thy giant size.

XXI.

ON SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES.

MY spirit is too weak ; mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.
Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep,
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep
Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
Such dim-conceived glories of the brain,
Bring round the heart an indescribable feud ;
So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
Wasting of old Time — with a billowy main
A sun, a shadow of a magnitude.

XXII.

TO HAYDON.

(WITH THE PRECEDING SONNET.)

HAYDON! forgive me that I cannot speak
Definitively of these mighty things ;
 Forgive me, that I have not eagle's wings,
That what I want I know not where to seek.
And think that I would not be over-meek,
 In rolling out upfollowed thunderings,
 Even to the steep of Heliconian springs,
Were I of ample strength for such a freak.
Think, too, that all these numbers should be thine ;
 Whose else? In this who touch thy vesture's
 hem?
For, when men stared at what was most divine
 With brainless idiotism and o'erwise phlegm,
Thou hadst beheld the full Hesperian shine
 Of their star in the east, and gone to worship
 them!

XXIII.

WRITTEN IN THE COTTAGE WHERE BURNS WAS
BORN.

THIS mortal body of a thousand days
Now fills, O Burns, a space in thine own room,
Where thou didst dream alone on budded bays,
Happy and thoughtless of thy day of doom!
My pulse is warm with thine old Barley-bree,
My head is light with pledging a great soul,
My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,
Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal;
Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,
Yet can I ope thy window-sash to find
The meadow thou hast tramped o'er and o'er —
Yet can I think of thee till thought is blind, —
Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name, —
O smile among the shades, for this is fame!

XXIV.

TO THE NILE.

SON of the old moon-mountains African !
Stream of the Pyramid and Crocodile !
We call thee fruitful, and that very while
A desert fills our seeing's inward span :
Nurse of swart nations since the world began,
Art thou so fruitful ? or dost thou beguile
Those men to honour thee, who, worn with toil,
Rest them a space 'twixt Cairo and Decan ?
O may dark fancies err ! They surely do ;
'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste
Of all beyond itself. Thou dost bedew
Green rushes like our rivers, and dost taste
The pleasant sun-rise. Green isles hast thou too,
And to the sea as happily dost haste.

XXV.

ON SITTING DOWN TO READ "KING LEAR" ONCE
AGAIN.

O GOLDEN-TONGUED Romance with serene
lute!

Fair plumed Syren! Queen! if far away!

Leave melodizing on this wintry day,
Shut up thine olden volume, and be mute.

Adieu! for once again the fierce dispute,

Betwixt hell torment and impassioned clay,

Must I burn through; once more assay
The bitter sweet of this Shakspearian fruit.

Chief Poet! and ye clouds of Albion,

Begetters of our deep eternal theme,
When I am through the old oak forest gone,

Let me not wander in a barren dream,

But when I am consumed with the Fire,
Give me new Phœnix-wings to fly at my desire.

XXVI.

READ me a lesson, Muse, and speak it loud
Upon the top of Nevis, blind in mist !
I look into the chasms, and a shroud
Vaporous doth hide them, — just so much I wist
Mankind do know of hell ; I look o'erhead,
And there is sullen mist, — even so much
Mankind can tell of heaven ; mist is spread
Before the earth, beneath me, — even such,
Even so vague is man's sight of himself !
Here are the craggy stones beneath my feet, —
Thus much I know that, a poor witless elf,
I tread on them, — that all my eye doth meet
Is mist and crag, not only on this height,
But in the world of thought and mental might !

POSTHUMOUS POEMS.

POSTHUMOUS POEMS.



FINGAL'S CAVE.

NOT Aladdin magian
Ever such a work began ;
Not the wizard of the Dee
Ever such a dream could see ;
Not St. John, in Patmos' isle,
In the passion of his toil,
When he saw the churches seven,
Golden aisled, built up in heaven,
Gazed at such a rugged wonder ! —
As I stood its roofing under,
Lo ! I saw one sleeping there,
On the marble cold and bare ;
While the surges washed his feet,
And his garments white did beat,
Drenched about the sombre rocks ;
On his neck his well-grown locks,
Lifted dry above the main,
Were upon the curl again.
“ What is this ? and what art thou ? ”
Whispered I, and touch'd his brow ;
“ What art thou ? and what is this ? ”
Whispered I, and strove to kiss
The spirit's hand, to wake his eyes ;
Up he started in a trice :
“ I am Lycidas,” said he,
“ Fam'd in fun'ral minstrelsy !
This was architectur'd thus
By the great Oceanus ! —
Here his mighty waters play
Hollow organs all the day ;

Here, by turns, his dolphins all,
 Finny palmers, great and small,
 Come to pay devotion due, —
 Each a mouth of pearls must strew !
 Many a mortal of these days
 Dares to pass our sacred ways ;
 Dares to touch, audaciously,
 This cathedral of the sea !
 I have been the pontiff-priest,
 Where the waters never rest,
 Where a fledgy sea-bird choir
 Soars for ever ! Holy fire
 I have hid from mortal man ;
 Proteus is my Sacristan !
 But the dulled eye of mortal
 Hath passed beyond the rocky portal ;
 So for ever will I leave
 Such a taint, and soon unweave
 All the magic of the place.”
 So saying, with a Spirit's glance
 He dived !



TO ———.

WHAT can I do to drive away
 Remembrance from my eyes ? for they have
 seen,
 Aye, an hour ago, my brilliant Queen !
 Touch has a memory. O say, love, say,
 What can I do to kill it and be free
 In my old liberty ?
 When every fair one that I saw was fair,
 Enough to catch me in but half a snare,
 Not keep me there :
 When, howe'er poor or particolour'd things,
 My muse had wings,

And ever ready was to take her course
 Whither I bent her force,
 Unintellectual, yet divine to me ; —
 Divine, I say ! — What sea-bird o'er the sea
 Is a philosopher the while he goes
 Winging along where the great water throes ?

How shall I do
 To get anew
 Those moulted feathers, and so mount once more
 Above, above
 The reach of fluttering Love,
 And make him cower lowly while I soar ?
 Shall I gulp wine ? No, that is vulgarism,
 A heresy and schism,
 Foisted into the canon law of love ; —
 No, — wine is only sweet to happy men ;
 More dismal cares
 Seize on me unawares, —
 Where shall I learn to get my peace again ?
 To banish thoughts of that most hateful land,
 Dungeon of my friends, that wicked strand
 Where they were wreck'd and live a wrecked life ;
 That monstrous region, whose dull rivers pour,
 Ever from their sordid urns unto the shore,
 Unown'd of any weedy-haired gods ;
 Whose winds, all zephyrless, hold scourging rods,
 Iced in the great lakes ; to afflict mankind ;
 Whose rank-grown forests, frosted, black, and
 blind,
 Would fright a Dryad ; whose harsh herbage
 meads
 Make lean and lank the starv'd ox while he feeds ;
 There bad flowers have no scent, birds no sweet
 song,
 And great unerring Nature once seems wrong.

O, for some sunny spell
 To dissipate the shadows of this hell !

Say they are gone, — with the new dawning light
 Steps forth my lady bright !
 O, let me once more rest
 My soul upon that dazzling breast !
 Let once again these aching arms be placed,
 The tender gaolers of thy waist !
 And let me feel that warm breath here and there
 To spread a rapture in my very hair, —
 O, the sweetness of the pain !
 Give me those lips again !
 Enough ! Enough ! it is enough for me
 To dream of thee !



HYMN TO APOLLO.

GOD of the golden bow,
 And of the golden lyre,
 And of the golden hair,
 And of the golden fire,
 Charioteer
 Of the patient year,
 Where — where slept thine ire,
 When like a blank idiot I put on thy wreath,
 Thy laurel, thy glory,
 The light of thy story,
 Or was I a worm — too low crawling, for death ?
 O Delphic Apollo !

The Thunderer grasp'd and grasp'd,
 The Thunderer frown'd and frown'd ;
 The eagle's feathery mane
 For wrath became stiffen'd — the sound
 Of breeding thunder
 Went drowsily under,
 Muttering to be unbound.
 O why didst thou pity, and for a worm
 Why touch thy soft lute

Till the thunder was mute,
 Why was not I crush'd — such a pitiful gærm?
 O Delphic Apollo!

The Pleiades were up,
 Watching the silent air;
 The seeds and roots in the Earth
 Were swelling for summer fare;
 The Ocean, its neighbour,
 Was at its old labour,
 When, who — who did dare
 To tie, like a madman, thy plant round his brow,
 And grin and look proudly,
 And blaspheme so loudly,
 And live for that honour, to stoop to thee now?
 O Delphic Apollo!



LINES.

UNFELT, unheard, unseen,
 I've left my little queen,
 Her languid arms in silver slumber lying:
 Ah! through their nestling touch,
 Who — who could tell how much
 There is for madness — cruel, or complying?

Those faery lids how sleek!
 Those lips how moist! — they speak,
 In ripest quiet, shadows of sweet sounds:
 Into my fancy's ear
 Melting a burden dear,
 How "Love doth know no fulness, and no bounds."

True! — tender monitors!
 I bend unto your laws:

This sweetest day for dalliance was born !
 So, without more ado,
 I'll feel my heaven anew,
 For all the blushing of the hasty morn.

1817.



SONG.

I.

HUSH, hush ! tread softly ! hush, hush, my dear !
 All the house is asleep, but we know very well
 That the jealous, the jealous old bald-pate may
 hear,
 Tho' you've padded his night-cap — O sweet
 Isabel !
 Tho' your feet are more light than a Faery's
 feet,
 Who dances on bubbles where brooklets meet,—
 Hush, hush ! soft tiptoe ! hush, hush, my dear !
 For less than a nothing the jealous can hear.

II.

No leaf doth tremble, no ripple is there
 On the river, — all's still, and the night's sleepy eye
 Closes up, and forgets all its Lethean care,
 Charm'd to death by the drone of the humming
 May-fly ;
 And the moon, whether prudish or complaisant,
 Has fled to her bower, well knowing I want
 No light in the dusk, no torch in the gloom,
 But my Isabel's eyes, and her lips pulp'd with bloom.

III.

Lift the latch ! ah gently ! ah tenderly — sweet !
 We are dead if that latchet gives one little clink !

Well done — now those lips, and a flowery seat —
 The old man may sleep, and the planets may
 wink ;
 The shut rose shall dream of our loves and
 awake
 Full-blown, and such warmth for the morning
 take,
 The stock-dove shall hatch his soft twin-eggs and coo,
 While I kiss to the melody, aching all through !

1818.



FAERY SONG.

SHED no tear ! O shed no tear !
 The flower will bloom another year.
 Weep no more ! O weep no more !
 Young buds sleep in the root's white core.
 Dry your eyes ! O dry your eyes !
 For I was taught in Paradise
 To ease my breast of melodies —
 Shed no tear.

Overhead ! look overhead !
 'Mong the blossoms white and red —
 Look up, look up. I flutter now
 On this fresh pomegranate bough.
 See me ! 'tis this silvery bill
 Ever cures the good man's ill.
 Shed no tear ! O shed no tear !
 The flower will bloom another year.
 Adieu, Adieu — I fly, adieu,
 I vanish in the heaven's blue —
 Adieu, Adieu !

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI.

A BALLAD.

I.

O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

II.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

III.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

IV.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful — a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

V.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

VI.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery song.

VII.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said —
“ I love thee true.”

VIII.

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sigh'd full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

IX.

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd — Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

X.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried — “ La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!”

XI.

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,

And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

XII.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

1819.



THE EVE OF ST. MARK.

(UNFINISHED.)

UPON a Sabbath-day it fell ;
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,
That call'd the folk to evening prayer ;
The city streets were clean and fair
From wholesome drench of April rains,
And, on the western window-panes,
The chilly sunset faintly told
Of unmatured green, valleys cold,
Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,
Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
And daisies on the aguish hills.

Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell :
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies,
Warm from their fireside orat'ries ;
And moving, with demurest air,
To even-song, and vesper prayer.
Each arched porch, and entry low,
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow,

With whispers push, and shuffling feet,
While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceased, the prayers begun,
And Bertha had not yet half done
A curious volume, patch'd and torn,
That all day long, from earliest morn,
Had taken captive her two eyes,
Among its golden broideries ;
Perplex'd her with a thousand things, —
The stars of Heaven, and angels' wings,
Martyrs in a fiery blaze,
Azure saints and silver rays,
Moses' breastplate, and the seven
Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,
The winged Lion of Saint Mark,
And the Covenantal Ark,
With its many mysteries,
Cherubim and golden mice

Bertha was a maiden fair,
Dwelling in th' old Minster-square ;
From her fireside she could see,
Sidelong, its rich antiquity,
Far as the Bishop's garden-wall ;
Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,
Full-leaved, the forest had outstript,
By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,
So shelter'd by the mighty pile,
Bertha arose, and read awhile,
With forehead 'gainst the window-pane.
Again she tried, and then again,
Until the dusk eve left her dark
Upon the legend of St. Mark.
From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,
She lifted up her soft warm chin,
With aching neck and swimming eyes
And dazed with saintly imag'ries.

All was gloom, and silent all,
Save now and then the still foot-fall
Of one returning homewards late,
Past the echoing minster-gate.
The clamorous daws, that all the day
Above tree-tops and towers play,
Pair by pair had gone to rest,
Each in its ancient belfry-nest,
Where asleep they fall betimes,
To music and the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom,
Abroad and in the homely room :
Down she sat, poor cheated soul !
And struck a lamp from the dismal coal ;
Leaned forward, with bright drooping hair
And slant book, full against the glare.
Her shadow, in uneasy guise,
Hover'd about, a giant size,
On ceiling-beam and old oak chair,
The parrot's cage, and panel square ;
And the warm angled winter-screen,
On which were many monsters seen,
Call'd doves of Siam, Lima mice,
And legless birds of Paradise,
Macaw, and tender Av'davat,
And silken-furr'd Angora cat.
Untired she read, her shadow still
Glower'd about, as it would fill
The room with wildest forms and shades,
As though some ghostly queen of spades
Had come to mock behind her back,
And dance, and ruffle her garments black.
Untired she read the legend page,
Of holy Mark, from youth to age,
On land, on sea, in pagan chains,
Rejoicing for his many pains.
Sometimes the learned eremite,

With golden star, or dagger bright,
 Referr'd to pious poesies
 Written in smallest crow-quill size
 Beneath the text; and thus the rhyme
 Was parcell'd out from time to time :
 — “Als writith he of swevenis,
 Men han beforne they wake in bliss,
 Whanne that hir friendes thinke him bound
 In crimped shroude farre under grounde ;
 And how a litling child mote be
 A saint er its nativitie,
 Gif that the modre (God her blesse !)
 Kepen in solitarinesse,
 And kissen devoute the holy croce,
 Of Goddes love, and Sathan's force, —
 He writith; and things many mo
 Of swiche things I may not shew.
 Bot I must tellen verilie
 Somdel of Saintè Cicilie,
 And chieffie what he auctorethe
 Of Saintè Markis life and dethe :”

At length her constant eyelids come
 Upon the fervent martyrdom ;
 Then lastly to his holy shrine,
 Exalt amid the tapers' shine
 At Venice, —

1819.

—◆—
 TO FANNY.

PHYSICIAN Nature ! let my spirit blood !
 O ease my heart of verse and let me rest ;
 Throw me upon thy Tripod, till the flood
 Of stifling numbers ebbs from my full breast.
 A theme ! a theme ! Great Nature ! give a theme

Let me begin my dream.
 I come — I see thee, as thou standest there ;
 Beckon me not into the wintry air.

Ah ! dearest love, sweet home of all my fears,
 And hopes, and joys, and panting miseries, —
 To-night, if I may guess, thy beauty wears
 A smile of such delight,
 As brilliant and as bright,
 As when with ravished, aching, vassal eyes,
 Lost in soft amaze,
 I gaze, I gaze !

Who now, with greedy looks, eats up my feast ?
 What stare outfaces now my silver moon !
 Ah ! keep that hand unravished at the least ;
 Let, let the amorous burn —
 But, pr'ythee, do not turn
 The current of your heart from me so soon.
 O ! save, in charity,
 The quickest pulse for me.

Save it for me, sweet love ! though music breathe
Voluptuous visions into the warm air,
 Though swimming through the dance's dangerous
 wreath ;
 Be like an April day,
 Smiling and cold and gay,
 A temperate lily, temperate as fair ;
 Then, Heaven ! there will be
 A warmer June for me.

Why, this — you'll say, my Fanny ! is not true :
 Put your soft hand upon your snowy side,
 Where the heart beats: confess — 'tis nothing
 new —
 Must not a woman be
 A feather on the sea,

Sway'd to and fro by every wind and tide ?
Of as uncertain speed
As blow-ball from the mead ?

I know it — and to know it is despair
To one who loves you as I love, sweet Fanny !
Whose heart goes flutt'ring for you every where,
Nor, when away you roam,
Dare keep its wretched home,
Love, love alone, his pains severe and many :
Then, loveliest ! keep me free,
From torturing jealousy.

Ah ! if you prize my subdued soul above
The poor, the fading, brief, pride of an hour ;
Let none profane my Holy See of love,
Or with a rude hand break
The sacramental cake :
Let none else touch the just new-budded flower ;
If not — may my eyes close,
Love ! on their lost repose.

SONNETS.



I.

O H! how I love, on a fair summer's eve,
When streams of light pour down the golden
west,
And on the balmy zephyrs tranquil rest
The silver clouds, — far, far away to leave
All meaner thoughts, and take a sweet reprieve
From little cares ; to find, with easy quest,
A fragrant wild, with Nature's beauty drest,
And there into delight my soul deceive.
There warm my breast with patriotic lore,
Musing on Milton's fate — on Sydney's bier —
Till their stern forms before my mind arise :
Perhaps on wing of Poesy upsoar,
Full often dropping a delicious tear,
When some melodious sorrow spells mine eyes.

1816.

II.

TO A YOUNG LADY WHO SENT ME A LAUREL
CROWN.

FRESH morning gusts have blown away all fear
 From my glad bosom — now from gloominess
 I mount forever — not an atom less
 Than the proud laurel shall content my bier.
 No! by the eternal stars! or why sit here
 In the Sun's eye, and 'gainst my temples press
 Apollo's very leaves, woven to bless
 By thy white fingers and thy spirit clear.
 Lo! who dares say, "Do this?" Who dares call
 down
 My will from its high purpose? Who say,
 "Stand,"
 Or "Go?" This mighty moment I would frown
 On abject Cæsars — not the stoutest band
 Of mailed heroes should tear off my crown:
 Yet would I kneel and kiss thy gentle hand!

III.

AFTER dark vapors have oppress'd our plains
For a long dreary season, comes a day
Born of the gentle south, and clears away
From the sick heavens all unseemly stains.
The anxious mouth, relieved from its pains,
Takes as a long-lost right the feel of May,
The eyelids with the passing coolness play,
Like rose-leaves with the drip of summer rains.
And calmest thoughts come round us — as, of leaves
Budding, — fruit ripening in stillness, — autumn
suns
Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves, —
Sweet Sappho's cheek, — a sleeping infant's
breath, —
The gradual sand that through an hour-glass
runs, —
A woodland rivulet, — a Poet's death.

Jan. 1817.

IV.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK SPACE OF A LEAF
AT THE END OF CHAUCER'S TALE OF "THE
FLOWRE AND THE LEFE."

THIS pleasant tale is like a little copse :
The honeyed lines so freshly interlace,
To keep the reader in so sweet a place,
So that he here and there full-hearted stops ;
And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops
Come cool and suddenly against his face,
And, by the wandering melody, may trace
Which way the tender-legged linnets hops.
Oh ! what a power has white simplicity !
What mighty power has this gentle story !
I, that do ever feel athirst for glory,
Could at this moment be content to lie
Meekly upon the grass, as those whose sobbings
Were heard of none beside the mournful robins.

Feb. 1817

V.

ON THE SEA.

IT keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be moved for days from where it sometime fell,
When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
O ye! who have your eyeballs vexed and tired,
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
O ye! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody, —
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

Aug. 1817.

VI.

ON LEIGH HUNT'S POEM, THE "STORY OF
RIMINI."

WHO loves to peer up at the morning sun,
With half-shut eyes and comfortable cheek,
Let him, with this sweet tale, full often seek
For meadows where the little rivers run;
Who loves to linger with that brightest one
Of Heaven — Hesperus — let him lowly speak
These numbers to the night, and starlight meek,
Or moon, if that her hunting be begun.
He who knows these delights, and too is prone
To moralize upon a smile or tear,
Will find at once a region of his own,
A bower for his spirit, and will steer
To alleys, where the fir-tree drops its cone,
Where robins hop, and fallen leaves are sear.

1817.

VII.

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming
brain,
Before high-piled books, in charact'ry,
Hold like rich garner's the full-ripen'd grain ;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance ;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour !
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love ! — then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

1817.

VIII.

TO HOMER.

STANDING aloof in giant ignorance,
Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,
As one who sits ashore and longs perchance
To visit dolphin-coral in deep seas.
So thou wast blind! — but then the veil was rent,
For Jove uncurtain'd Heaven to let thee live,
And Neptune made for thee a spermy tent,
And Pan made sing for thee his forest-hive;
Aye, on the shores of darkness there is light,
And precipices show untrodden green;
There is a budding morrow in midnight;
There is a triple sight in blindness keen:
Such seeing hadst thou, as it once befell
To Dian, Queen of Earth, and Heaven, and Hell.

1818.

IX.

ANSWER TO A SONNET ENDING THUS : —

“Dark eyes are dearer far
Than those that made the hyacinthine bell.”

BY J. H. REYNOLDS.

BLUE! 'Tis the life of heaven, — the domain
Of Cynthia, — the wide palace of the sun, —
The tent of Hesperus, and all his train, —
The bosomer of clouds, gold, gray, and dun.
Blue! 'Tis the life of waters — ocean
And all its vassal streams: pools numberless
May range, and foam, and fret, but never can
Subside, if not to dark-blue nativeness.
Blue! Gentle cousin of the forest-green,
Married to green in all the sweetest flowers —
Forget-me-not, — the blue-bell, — and, that queen
Of secrecy, the violet: what strange powers
Hast thou, as a mere shadow! But how great,
When in an Eye thou art alive with fate!

Feb. 1818.

X.

TO J. H. REYNOLDS.

O THAT a week could be an age, and we
Felt parting and warm meeting every week ;
Then one poor year a thousand years would be,
The flush of welcome ever on the cheek :
So could we live long life in little space,
So time itself would be annihilatè,
So a day's journey in oblivious haze
To serve our joys would lengthen and dilate.
O to arrive each Monday morn from Ind !
To land each Tuesday from the rich Levant !
In little time a host of joys to bind,
And keep our souls in one eternal pant !
This morn, my friend, and yester-evening taught
Me how to harbor such a happy thought.

XI.

TO ——.*

TIME'S sea hath been five years at its low ebb,
Long hours have to and fro let creep the sand,
Since I was tangled in thy beauty's web,
And snared by the ungloving of thine hand.
And yet I never look on midnight sky,
But I behold thine eyes' well-remembered light;
I cannot look upon the rose's dye,
But to thy cheek my soul doth take its flight;
I cannot look on any budding flower,
But my fond ear, in fancy at thy lips,
And hearkening for a love-sound, doth devour
Its sweets in the wrong sense:— 'Thou dost
eclipse
Every delight with sweet remembering,
And grief unto my darling joys dost bring.

* A lady whom he saw for some moments at Vauxhall.

XII.

TO SLEEP.

O SOFT embalmer of the still midnight!
Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom-pleased eyes, embower'd from the
light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,
Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities;
Then save me, or the passed day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;
Save me from curious conscience, that still lords
Its strength, for darkness burrowing like a mole;
Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,
And seal the hushed casket of my soul.

1819.

XIII.

ON FAME.

FAME, like a wayward girl, will still be coy
To those who woo her with too slavish knees,
But makes surrender to some thoughtless boy,
And dotes the more upon a heart at ease.
She is a Gipsy, — will not speak to those
Who have not learnt to be content without her ;
A Jilt, whose ear was never whisper'd close,
Who thinks they scandal her who talk about
her ;
A very Gipsy is she, Nilus-born,
Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar ,
Ye lovesick Bards ! repay her scorn for scorn ;
Ye Artists lovelorn ! madmen that ye are !
Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,
Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

1819.

XIV.

ON FAME.

“You cannot eat your cake and have it too.” — *Proverb.*

HOW fever'd is the man, who cannot look
Upon his mortal days with temperate blood,
Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,
And robs his fair name of its maidenhood :
It is as if the rose should pluck herself,
Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom ;
As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,
Should darken her pure grot with muddy gloom,
But the rose leaves herself upon the brier,
For winds to kiss and grateful bees to feed,
And the ripe plum still wears its dim attire,
The undisturbed lake has crystal space :
Why then should man, teasing the world for
 grace,
Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed ?
1819.

XV.

WHY did I laugh to-night? No voice will tell;
No God, no Demon of severe response,
Deigns to reply from Heaven or from Hell:
Then to my human heart I turn at once. —
Heart! Thou and I are here sad and alone;
I say, why did I laugh? O mortal pain!
O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I moan,
To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain.
Why did I laugh? I know this Being's lease,
My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads;
Yet would I on this very midnight cease,
And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds;
Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed,
But Death intenser — Death is Life's high meed.

1819.

XVI.

ON A DREAM.

AS Hermes once took to his feathers light,
When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and
slept,
So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright,
So play'd, so charm'd, so conquer'd, so bereft
The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes,
And seeing it asleep, so fled away,
Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,
Nor unto Tempe, where Jove grieved a day,
But to that second circle of sad Hell,
Where in the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw
Of rain and hailstones, lovers need not tell
Their sorrows: — pale were the sweet lips I saw,
Pale were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the form
I floated with, about that melancholy storm.

1819.

XVII.

IF by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd,
And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet
Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness,
Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,
Sandals more interwoven and complete
To fit the naked foot of poesy ;
Let us inspect the lyre, and weigh the stress
Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd
By ear industrious, and attention meet ;
Misers of sound and syllable, no less
Than Midas of his coinage, let us be
Jealous of dead leaves in the bay-wreath crown :
So, if we may not let the Muse be free,
She will be bound with garlands of her own.

1819.

XVIII.

THE day is gone, and all its sweets are gone !
Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer
 breast,
Warm breath, light whisper, tender semitone,
Bright eyes, accomplish'd shape, and lang'rous
 waist !
Faded the flower and all its budded charms,
Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,
Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,
Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise !
Vanish'd unseasonably at shut of eve,
When the dusk holiday — or holineight —
Of fragrant-curtain'd love begins to weave
The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight :
But, as I've read love's missal through to-day,
He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

1819.

XIX.

I CRY your mercy — pity — love — ay, love !
Merciful love that tantalizes not,
One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless love,
Unmask'd, and being seen — without a blot !
O ! let me have thee whole, — all — all — be mine !
That shape, that fairness, that sweet minor zest
Of love, your kiss, — those hands, those eyes divine,
That warm, white, lucent, million-pleasur'd
breast, —
Yourself — your soul — in pity give me all,
Withhold no atom's atom, or I die,
Or living on perhaps, your wretched thrall,
Forget, in the mist of idle misery,
Life's purposes — the palate of my mind
Losing its gust, and my ambition blind !

1819.

XX.

KEATS'S LAST SONNET.

BRIGHT star, would I were steadfast as thou
art!
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors :
No — yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel forever its soft fall and swell,
Awake forever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever — or else swoon to death.*

* Another reading : —

Half-passionless, and so swoon on to death.

THE END.

